

"I AM THE LAW"

The Life of Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, 1876-1956

By

Christopher R. Herchold

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*Approved
Allen W. Moyer
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Table of Contents

Preface		
Chapter I	Garden State Backdrop.....	1
Chapter II	Growing Up in the "Horseshoe".....	10
Chapter III	The "Reformer" Beats the "Reformers".....	16
Chapter IV	Three Governors in a Decade.....	28
Chapter V	"Hague's Hundred Thousand".....	39
Chapter VI	Benevolent Despot.....	56
Chapter VII	From Smith to Truman.....	65
Chapter VIII	"A Lace-Curtain Irish Snapping Turtle".....	79
Chapter IX	"I Am The Law".....	90
Chapter X	"God Have Mercy on His Sinful, Greedy Soul"..	105
Appendix A		
Appendix B		
Appendix C		
Bibliography		

Preface

In writing the following account of the life and career of Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, I have been aided by many persons. Dr. Allen W. Moger, chairman of Washington and Lee's History department, read and guided the entire manuscript. Among librarians, Miss Martha Cullipher of Washington and Lee's McCormack Library, Major Benjamin Bontemps of the Virginia Military Institute's Preston Library, and Mr. George Sugarman of the Jersey City Public Library's New Jersey Archives, have been most helpful. New Jersey's two United States Senators, Clifford P. Case and Harrison A. Williams, Jr. both sent valuable information from the Library of Congress, as did Representative Dominick V. Daniels of New Jersey's Fourteenth District.

Through the greatly appreciated efforts of my father, I was able to interview acquaintances and political associates of Mayor Hague. Several of those interviewed, held high positions in the many Hague administrations or still hold political office in Hudson County. For personal reasons they chose to remain anonymous, and the information they volunteered is referred to as "Confidential Interview" in the footnotes. Their reluctance shows that the memory of Mayor Hague in New Jersey is very much alive.

Finally, I would like to thank my typist, Mrs. John Hughes, and assume complete responsibility for historical error or lack of literary skill.

Christopher R. Herchold

Lexington, Virginia
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"A leader is one who leads, and knows
the ropes; a politician is one who
knows the ropes."

J. T. Salter, 1940.

CHAPTER I: GARDEN STATE BACKDROP

During the late afternoon of December 4, 1875, William Marcy Tweed escaped from New York City's debtor's prison on Ludlow Street. The acid attacks of Thomas Nast and the reform thrusts of Governor Samuel J. Tilden had finally crumbled his hold on New York politics. Now the man whose name subsequently became synonymous with political bossism intended to seek refuge in Spain which had not yet negotiated an extradition treaty with the United States. Six months after his escape, a disguised Tweed boarded the schooner "Frank Atwood" in lower New York Harbor which would take him to St. Augustine, Florida, and further imprisonment after arrest by the authorities in Florida.

During the six months that he waited for a favorable opportunity to leave the country, Tweed evaded his New York enemies by hiding across the Hudson in Weehawken, New Jersey. Unknown to him, several miles downriver in Jersey City, a child was born who would one day master Tweed's act so well that he would surpass the former Tammany leader in power and influence without suffering a similar fate. Tweed could not have known that only a few miles and several decades separated the demise of one era of political bossism and the beginnings of another.¹

On January 17, 1876, assisted by a midwife, Margaret Hague gave birth to her third son on the table of her kitchen in a frame tenement in the old Horseshoe section of Jersey City. She and her husband John Hague named the boy Frank presumably in honor of some family relation. Both Hagues had emigrated from County Cavan in Ulster, and had separately come to Jersey City where they met and

married. John Hague had first fled Ireland "to escape arrest for a conspiracy against the British Government."² He joined the armies of Pope Pius IX in Italy, and fought for the papal cause for the duration of the Italian wars of liberation. When he finally arrived in Jersey City, he became a blacksmith for the Erie Railroad, and later a bank guard for the First National Bank of Jersey City. The latter job was secured for him by Dennis McLaughlin, the Democratic leader in the Horseshoe.³ Primarily for this reason, John Hague has been described as "a man without political aspiration but subject to typical Hibernic fascination by the subtleties of municipal government."⁴ Margaret Hague was the dominant partner in their relationship and "is recalled by one old Jerseyite a 'a bitch on wheels.'"⁵

The Horseshoe, in which the Hagues lived, was the result of a Republican gerrymander in the state legislature in 1871, which successfully concentrated "all the Democratic voters in one assembly district."⁶ The Hagues lived in perhaps the poorest, and at the same time, most heavily Democratic area in the state. To understand the Horseshoe environment which was the decisive influence upon Frank Hague's life, one must first understand the political, social, and economic trends in New Jersey before the turn of the century.

From the time that Alexander Hamilton founded the "Society for Establishment of Useful Manufactures" and planned America's first industrial city in 1791 at the Great Falls in Paterson, New Jersey has depended upon industry for the great majority of her wealth and progress. The depth of New Jersey's industrial frame became more significant when proper transportation routes capitalized on her

location, and effectively made her a slave of Philadelphia on the one hand, and New York on the other.

Along with its location, throughout the nineteenth century, the legislators of the Garden State passed lenient laws which would attract industry from neighboring states with more stringent statutes. As early as 1840, Mayor Dudley Gregory of Jersey City listed as one of his city's advantages, "... the small amount of taxes levied to support state, county, and city government compared to New York and Brooklyn."⁷ Real expansion began to occur after the Civil War. The captains of industry, noting New Jersey's key location and the deliberate absence of any effective anti-monopolistic statutes, eagerly invested their enormous sums of money. They used New Jersey to obtain the charters and other benefits which were unavailable, for the small price they were willing to pay, in New York and Pennsylvania. As Lincoln Steffens remarked in his Autobiography, "For a century after Hamilton railroad companies and financiers of Philadelphia and New York had followed their great leader in to Jersey to get leave to break the laws of other states, and they came to rule that state absolutely ..."⁸ Rapidly, the railroads bought all of the waterfront areas and waterfront privileges on the Jersey side of the Hudson.

At the end of the nineteenth century, every railroad line from New York City to the South and West, except for certain branches of the New York Central, had to cross New Jersey. The railroads became so numerous that no point in the state was more than ten miles

distance from one.⁹ Jersey City itself, with nine miles of waterfront became the terminus for eight railroads. As the railroads expanded, their financiers demanded and received tax exemptions from the various municipalities which their lines crossed. By 1881, one third of Jersey City was owned by the railroads, and the aggregate property exempt from taxes was the incredible sum of \$19,394,000.¹⁰ The railroads had a stranglehold on the state, and in particular, on communities such as Jersey City whose locations were essential for transportation routes. In Jersey City, the city fathers proudly acknowledged their debt to the railroads, and boosted their city for further expansion. In 1910, a city-sponsored publication boasted,

"Jersey City stands at the gateway of the Western World. All the great traffic that makes navigation on New York Bay and Hudson River one of the greatest single movements of commerce in the world passes through Jersey City on its way to the East from the Western plains, and back again to the farms and towns of the interior from the factories and mercantile centers of the Atlantic States. There is no limit to the volume of this great ebb and flood of trade. It will grow as the country grows ... It will never be possible to choke Jersey City ... the waters must flow where the channel lies and in the end it must all pass through Jersey City."¹¹

Inevitably, the politics of the state, and in particular of Jersey City, became immeshed with its economic life. As the economic life of New Jersey flourished, its political life, choking from the privileges granted to the financiers, fell to extraordinary depths of corruption. The unhealthy alliance between big business

and Jersey government bred despots not leaders. "Gratitude to the railroads for the development they brought to the state sowed the seeds of the iron-bound despotism that has enslaved the beautiful little commonwealth for more than half a century."¹²

The rise of the railroads and their control of Jersey City is significant in the story of Frank Hague because his Irish immigrant forbears finally organized in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and determined that they also deserved a slice of the benefits. The manner in which the Irish Catholics waged war with the Protestant financier leaders of Jersey City would establish a building ground for Frank Hague, and his perfection of their techniques would insure his retention of power for a half-century. While the railroad men and their bankers grew richer, the poor Irish continued their drab existence in the squalor and misery of slums such as the Horseshoe. In Jersey City, as in Boston and New York decades before, they lacked effective weapons with which to break out of their poverty. Certainly the Irish could not employ significant economic tactics to overcome the rulers of Jersey City, so they resorted to the time-tested methods of their countrymen across the Hudson; they would organize and attempt to advance politically. The Irish wardheeler was born.

In the 1880's, in the Irish slums of Jersey City, politics developed in the saloons. By 1888, Jersey City could boast of 1200 saloons.¹³ Because they lacked any other place of relaxation and entertainment and because they were unable to gain admission

to the more respectable establishments uptown, the Irish made the saloon the focal point of their social life. The saloons quickly became political clubs where jobs and other help could be obtained. Within the slums, the saloon developed as the nucleus of political organization and every saloonkeeper became a potential political leader. Saloonkeepers became the leaders of the community, and for the most part were "good, honorable men." Often, they controlled the precincts in which their saloons were located. With the saloons as their base, the Irish politicians determined to change the balance of power in Jersey City.¹⁴

The first boss to surface in Jersey City, in the 1880's, was William McAvoy. He promptly appointed Dennis McLaughlin as his lieutenant in the Horseshoe. McLaughlin first established himself in politics "on the shoulders of the personal acquaintances he made while serving his newspaper route in the old Horseshoe Assembly District."¹⁵ McLaughlin almost immediately gave his rule the stamp of corruption by making every officeholder in Hudson County "play the horses" on his racetrack in Guttenburg, New Jersey.¹⁶ McLaughlin, as his successors, accomplished little to raise the economic standard of his constituency, but managed to retain power by a skillful blend of offering jobs and threatening those to whom job offers were unimpressive. McAvoy's successor, Robert Davis "found his beginnings in the friendships he established among the customers, in the old First Ward of Jersey City, of the local gas company when he visited their cellars to take the state of their meters."¹⁷

Davis became a master of machine politics, basing his support on the forty saloons in the Horseshoe which became known as the

"Bloody Angle" of Jersey City politics. Davis extended his influence by cooperating with Tammany Hall and the Brooklyn machine across the Hudson. He offered protection to the saloonkeepers, maintained a close relationship with the Catholic clergy, even financing some of their activities, and kept his general constituency in line by frequent picnics and handouts. "Davis' black suit, bowler hat, and neck-line shirt symbolized machine politics in Jersey City."¹⁸

With the expansion of his power, Davis quickly forgot his original goal, and concerned himself mainly with the operation of his machine rather than the misery of his Irish constituency. He financed his organization by bribes from E. F. C. Young, a utilities magnate, who, in turn, received immunity from Davis. By this secret alliance with a supposed enemy of the Irish, Davis relinquished any place he might have in history, and is remembered mainly for his techniques which became guiding lessons to Frank Hague and his lieutenants. Joseph Tumulty, who also experienced a Horseshoe boyhood and later became secretary and personal advisor to President Wilson, frequently related a typical Jersey City political scene from his youth. Several nights before a certain election, in the Fifth Ward Democratic Club, Tumulty was "observing one of the club members intently tabulating figures." When Tumulty inquired why this was being done, the tabulator replied, "I am writing the returns."¹⁹ In order to be able to control the ballots, Davis quickly established control of the sheriff's office in Hudson County.

This developed into his chief legal asset.²⁰

Still, nothing under McLaughlin and Davis had allieviated the misery in the slums. Rather than fighting the monied interests, the Irish bosses had simply used them as a rallying cry, and secretly exchanged bribes with them. Now, the destitute sections of Jersey City were reeling under the combined evils of monopoly and bossism. Finally, in 1896, for a brief period, Jersey City experienced a measure of progressive reform. As John E. Bebout and Ronald J. Grele write; reform was almost inevitable by this time,

"It was logical that New Jersey progressivism began in Jersey City, for here the evils of the new order were compounded ... Jersey City was smarting under favoritism to the railroads, since the carriers owned more than one-fourth of the city's ratables. Boss rule had become so flagrant in 1892 that repeaters cast the graveyard vote in alphabetical order (and 48 ward heelers went to jail). No schools had been built since the 1870's; there were no parks other than a few small squares donated before the Civil War."²¹

In 1896, Mark Fagan, a young Irish undertaker with a brilliant political acumen, dented the Davis machine by beating the organization candidate, Phil McGovern for Fifth Ward Freeholder.* By showing genuine concern for the needs of the poor, Fagan, although a Republican, managed to build solid support

* The governing boards of counties in New Jersey are called Boards of Chosen Freeholders, and their members are Freeholders. New Jersey is the only state that applies this label.

in the slums. In 1901, he beat George T. Smith, son-in-law of E. F. C. Young, for the mayoralty of Jersey City. The Davis machine had badly miscalculated in selecting a candidate who was closely associated with the trusts at a time when public opinion reflected reform tendencies.²² Fagan successfully countered the not so progressive desires of the Republican boss of Jersey City, Col. Samuel Dickinson, and managed to provide the first real government, devoid of corruption, in thirty years. In the first decade of the twentieth century, it seemed that Jersey City would at last enjoy a respite from the tentacles of bosses and their misguided concerns. Most Jersey City citizens were unaware that a certain young man named Frank Hague was beginning to decide that he too deserved a slice of the benefits of municipal government. Even less people knew that young Frank had determined to savor the whole pie, not just a slice.

Chapter I

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16. Ibid.
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CHAPTER II: GROWING UP IN THE "HORSESHOE"

Chapter II.

Growing up in the Horseshoe in the late nineteenth century was not unlike coming of age in Harlem or on the Lower East Side. The Horseshoe, so-called because of its shape which included the city's Second and Fifth Wards after the 1871 assembly gerrymander, was divided by the freight tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and housed "the least fortunate of a largely impoverished citizenry."¹ Earning a living provided half the misery. As Dayton David McKean relates,

"The men worked for the railroads, the Colgate Soap Company, or the Lorillard ~~or~~ Tobacco Company. Unskilled men earned a dollar a day and skilled men a dollar and seventy-five cents. The railroad tracks crossed the Horseshoe at street grade, and the coal cars of the Erie on their way to New York were cheerfully regarded as communal property, so that the families of Cock Row and other Irish patches heated their house or tenements without cost to themselves."²

Living in the environment of the slums, the inhabitants came to regard violence as a literal necessity in gaining the basic essentials of life which would insure a tenuous survival. If one was unable to afford an article, whether food or clothing, one resorted to theft without any notion of law-breaking. It has been said that such a place would be "a breeding place for mosquitoes, gangsters, priests, prizefighters -- and political bosses."³

For the first few years of his life, Frank Hague endured sickness and grinding poverty. Everyday, his mother carried him on a pillow around the corner from their house on Tenth

Street to the free clinic at St. Francis Hospital. The future mayor would later say, in response to questions about the building of his Medical Center, "It is bad enough to be poor, but to be poor and sick at the same time is just hell."⁴

With seven other children to feed, John Hague's meager salary as a bank guard, condemned the family to the slums, and prohibited any opportunities for advancement. The Hagues, along with their countrymen in the Horseshoe, with the future holding little, relied upon their religion to provide the inspiration for their lives. Margaret Hague instilled Catholicism in her brood with all the fervor of a puritanical Roundhead. She insisted upon attendance at Mass, and left a lasting impression on Frank who maintained the rituals and tenets of Catholicism for the rest of his life. Although the initial dominant influence on her children, Margaret Hague was unable to keep them off the streets.*

In the 1880's, small boys in the Horseshoe quickly learned that survival meant gaining the ability to fight and steal. The boys employed their fists with pride, and any theft was regarded as a mark of distinction. Usually, the boys formed gangs both as a method of recreation and to facilitate the problems of stealing. Two of Frank's brothers, John and Hugh, became members of the Red Tigers in 1884. They assaulted women, robbed saloons, and generally made their portion of the Horseshoe inaccessible to safe traveling at night. Eventually the police managed to

disband the gang and convict most of its members including the two Hagues.⁵ Frank, although not a member, also devoted most of his time to the endless warfare of the streets. His parents enrolled him in Public School 21, but Frank, from the very first day, became a constant truant, and in 1889, at the age of twelve, was expelled from the sixth grade as an incorrigible. This decision of the principal of P.S. 21 terminated the future mayor's formal education.

Still a small sickly boy, Frank Hague spent the next two years at odd jobs in the Horseshoe. Without ambition or goals, he preferred loitering with his neighborhood friends to work or school. Baseball became his favorite preoccupation, and he and a friend named "Skidder" Madigan, lacking money, frequently enjoyed sneaking into the ballparks to watch the games.^{6*} In later years, Hague never forgot the conditions of his youth, and attempted to solve the problems of juvenile delinquents. In 1938, in a speech to the inmates of the Rahway Reformatory, he looked back upon his boyhood,

"A lot of you are probably suspicious of anything a public official says, and I don't blame you a darn bit. You've been kicked around plenty. You got into trouble when you were kids and yet you didn't do anything worse than I did. I grew up in a tough part of Jersey City, and most of my friends swiped things out of freight cars, and by the time I was twelve I had played hooky so often I was kicked out of school."⁷

* The prize ring also attracted him, and his knowledge and skill in prizefighting became proficient enough to enable Frank to manage several local fighters for a short time.

Finally, probably from family pressure dictating that he begin earning his share of the expenses, Hague became a laborer in a smithy shop. After slightly more than a year, he graduated to a similar job in the yards of the Erie Railroad. During the next four years of employment with Erie, both his physique and mental attitude began to change. From a weak and thin youngster, Frank developed into a tall, muscular and robust individual. From this point in his life, he would exercise strenuously, and maintain his physical fitness. Also, having always preferred loitering and playing to working, Frank determined that he and a career of manual labor were incompatible. Taking a cue from his brother Hugh, the onetime Red Tiger who had since gained employment in the fire department through the efforts of Dennis McLaughlin, he realized that the municipal payroll offered both a decent salary and relatively easy working conditions. If he were to survive and at the same time avoid long and difficult labor, he would be obliged to follow his brother into the city's employ. *

Before casting the die for politics, however, Hague briefly entertained his fascination with prizefighting. For a short period he managed a mediocre lightweight from Brooklyn named Joe Craig. This occupation provided two potentially useful functions for Frank Hague. It broadened the range of his acquaintances by enabling him to mix freely in athletic and social clubs of Jersey City. And it paid a salary which

outfitted him in the attire of a solid citizen with a bright future. Professor McKean has written,

"The job as manager gave young Frank Hague his first opportunity to wear fine clothes and to get away from the cast-off suits of his older brothers. There are reports of witnesses who were impressed by his four-button, double-breasted, plaid suits, and his long draped cape, slung over the left shoulder, as was then the fashion. His ability to wear clothes, which stayed with him through life, impressed the mothers of the Horseshoe, who urged their sons to emulate him."⁸

Unconsciously, throughout his youth, Frank Hague managed to avoid any hint of scandal which would ruin a potential politician. Although he involved himself in the street fights and petty thefts of a Horseshoe boyhood, he abstained altogether from women and liquor. At no time in his growth did Hague ever exhibit the slightest interest in women. After the death of John Hague in 1899, Frank lived at home with his mother, and attended Mass with her every Sunday.* Finally, at the ripe age of twenty seven, he married a Horseshoe neighbor, Jennie Warner, "a prim, shy, retiring girl who never played the slightest role in his political life."⁹

Frank Hague began his political career at the age of twenty-one in 1897. He received his start from Nat Kenny, who ironically was the father of John V. Kenny who would defeat Frank Hague in 1949 and end his political career. Nat, a

* Margaret Hague lived until 1922, long enough to see Frank assume the mayor's chair.

successful saloonkeeper in the Horseshoe, opposed Hudson County Boss Davis. Since the saloon clientele composed a significant portion of the votes the Davis Machine needed to remain in power, Kenny posed a real, if small, threat to the county political hierarchy. Davis's wardheeler in the Horseshoe, Dennis McLaughlin, promptly opened a saloon, the Park House, across the street from Kenny's in an effort to drive Kenny out of business. McLaughlin's move diverted enough business from Kenny's saloon, to cause Nat to decide that only electoral success would daunt McLaughlin and restore his business. He therefore determined to elect the next constable in the district. However, fearing the wrath of the Davis machine, none of Kenny's friends would accept the candidacy until a boilermaker named Mike Egan remembered the well-groomed prize fighting manager. Kenny summoned Hague who saw his opportunity and took it. Hague was inclined to accept immediately, but hesitated because he lacked money with which to finance a campaign. Eyewitnesses have reconstructed the conversation,

"I'll run, Mr. Kenny, but I'll need some money. I ain't got a dime."

"How much will you need?"

"Well, about seventy-five dollars, if I'm to make friends."

Kenny, unhesitatingly, gave Hague the sum desired, and launched a fabulously successful political career which would stretch for more than a half-century.¹⁰

Chapter II

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CHAPTER III: THE "REFORMER" BEATS THE "REFORMERS"

Chapter III.

Hague defeated McLaughlin's candidate, Jack Harnett, but the election was tainted with the same sort of alleged illegalities that would plague Hague for the rest of his life.

"When the ballot-boxes in one precinct were opened in the back room of Kenny's saloon, Hague had 300 votes -- and Harnett had one!irate Harnett followers wrecked the room, but Hague was declared elected."¹

Exhibiting a growing political awareness, he quickly forgot Nat Kenny's reasons for supporting him, and became a loyal member of the Davis machine. As constable, he received fees instead of a salary, and an inordinate amount of free time. Two years later, Sheriff William Heller attached him to his office with the rank of deputy and a twenty-five dollar a week salary.² Politically, these were his formative years. Hague's rising position enabled him to freely associate with older politicians at city hall, and to examine the techniques and intricacies of a well-oiled and well-entrenched machine. During these years of Hague's real education, he learned that the essence of politics in Jersey City was practicality.³ He remained unaffected by the sensitivities a formal education would have bestowed. Later critics have remarked that a formal education "might have ruined him."⁴ Probably, they are right. Not only have most American political bosses lacked formal instruction, but also Hague retained his ability to think strictly in terms of gain and loss which represented a carry-over

from gang relationships in the Horseshoe. He came to regard his political life as an extension of his slum boyhood. One made friends to help achieve one's goals, and repaid them if their loyalty remained constant. On the other hand, one dealt quickly and harshly with enemies. His brief grammar school years were only a flash in the formation of an almost primeval mind which learned to master politics absolutely.

In 1904, while still a deputy sheriff, Hague involved himself in an incident which almost terminated his political career, but in the long run proved an asset to him. An old Horseshoe friend named "Red" Dugan had been arrested "for swindling the People's Bank of Roxbury, Massachusetts of \$500 on a forged check."⁵ Hague and another deputy sheriff, Thomas Maddigan, traveled to Boston to provide the authorities with an alibi for Dugan. "Before his trip to Boston he had arrested some colored men for alleged illegal registration. The prosecutor suspected a scheme to intimidate colored Republican voters, and he promptly sent the papers to the grand jury and subpoenaed Hague as a witness. Instead of obeying the summons as a witness Hague went to Boston ..."⁶ The court found Hague guilty of contempt, and ordered that he be dropped from the rolls of the sheriff's office, and fined one hundred dollars. "The incident did him no political harm in the Horseshoe when later he revealed that it was Dugan's mother who had asked him to go to Boston to testify in her son's behalf."⁷

Because of the Dugan incident Hague acquired new political strength in the Horseshoe's Second Ward. Lacking a job, he turned to Boss Robert Davis who, cognizant of Hague's growing stature, appointed him sergeant-at-arms in the state House of Assembly in Trenton. Now Hague broadened his political horizons on the state level, and in 1907 returned to Jersey City a powerful if still relatively minor politician. Upon his return he faced a crossroads in his political future.

In 1905 the Republican reformer Mark Fagan had been elected to his third term as mayor of Jersey City. But two years later the business-oriented Republican organization headed by Col. Samuel Dickinson dumped Fagan. Nevertheless, the Fagan tenure had so severely damaged the Democratic Davis machine, that in 1907 insurgent Democrats elected a reform ticket with H. Otto Wittpenn as mayor. Hague felt that Wittpenn would emerge as the strongest political force in Jersey City, and turned against Davis by accepting the job of city hall custodian from Wittpenn in 1908. Hague, while sniffing the shifting winds of Jersey City politics, had thus temporarily aligned himself with the reformers.

For the first time, Hague received a sufficient salary of \$2,000, and more importantly, the post enabled him to distribute patronage. He promptly appointed a close friend and future deputy mayor, John F. Malone as a deputy custodian and he further strengthened his position by making certain that every

city hall janitor was a Hague supporter from the Horseshoe. Custodian Hague shrewdly befriended two important people. The first, A. Harry Moore, was Mayor Wittpenn's secretary. Hague immediately recognized potential candidate appeal in Moore since he was a Protestant, a spell-binding orator, and active in civic circles. With the backing of Hague's machine, Moore would later become the only three term governor in New Jersey history. He also befriended John Milton, a brilliant lawyer serving in the city's legal department. Milton was destined to become Hague's personal counsel, and a United States Senator.

In 1911, having cultivated a substantial following during the past three years, Frank Hague was elected to the Street and Water Board on Mayor Wittpenn's ticket. Robert Davis had died in 1910, and left Jersey City and Hudson County without a single powerful boss. Since he was mayor of Jersey City, Davis's mantle should have descended upon Wittpenn's shoulders. But Frank Hague had other ideas. Governor Woodrow Wilson's presidential candidacy presented an ideal opportunity for Hague to challenge Wittpenn's leadership.

During the previous two years, Woodrow Wilson had mastered the Democratic bosses who had elected him, and had waged a successful war against the financial interests of New Jersey. Hague, while City Hall Custodian and a member of Mayor Wittpenn's reform government, strongly supported Wilson. And in 1911, Wittpenn lined up behind Wilson's presidential aspirations.

But since this move coincided with Wittpenn's attempted assumption of power in Hudson County after the death of Davis, Hague chose to smear Wittpenn with the boss label, and joined the state Democratic boss, James Smith, Jr. of Newark in opposing Wilson.

Smith, battered after two years of struggling unsuccessfully with Wilson, once again became a "formidable foe" after he received Hague's valuable support.⁸ At this point, Hague was skillfully maneuvering to install himself as the next leader of Jersey City. By a paradoxical blend of clever patronage distribution and cutting the budget by \$70,000, Hague had made a reputation as something of a reformer on the Street and Water Board. Actually, he cared little if Wilson won or lost the presidency, but by opposing Otto Wittpenn as a boss, he further enhanced his reform image. Frank Hague, masquerading as a reformer, used reform as an instrument to defeat the real reformers. The fight over Wilson proved to be the first step in defeating Wittpenn.

As 1912 dawned, Hague was aligned with the anti-Wilson and anti-Wittpenn coalition of Boss Smith and his colleague James R. Nugent. Hague first began strengthening fences at home. When the Republicans and Smith Democrats in the legislature passed a law over Wilson's veto "which divested Wittpenn of any control over the Street and Water" Board, "Hague promptly began replacing pro-Wilson laborers with pro-Smith laborers."⁹

Hague then proceeded to echo William Randolph Hearst's charges that Wilson opposed immigration. As Arthur Link writes,

"Italian-American voters were numerous in Jersey City and in other North Jersey cities, and Hague assiduously broadcast pamphlets emphasizing Wilson's alleged contempt for the 'new' immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In fact, he overlooked none of the devices that anti-Wilson men were using everywhere."¹⁰

But all the efforts of Hague, Smith, and Nugent failed as Wilson decisively carried twenty-four of New Jersey's twenty-eight delegates in the primary. Most unfortunately for Hague, Wilson rolled up huge majorities in sweeping Hudson County's three districts.

But the campaign yielded some benefits. With a respectable reputation as a result of service on the Street and Water Board, and by successfully smearing Wittpenn as a boss, Hague had emerged as one of the foremost reformers in Jersey City. By 1913, he resolved to fulfill his yet unachieved of toppling Wittpenn, and further esconcing himself in the city government.

Wittpenn desired to succeed Wilson in Trenton. The Democratic gubernatorial primary proved to be as complex and paradoxical as the previous presidential primary. The two major contenders were the incumbent, Governor James F. Fielder,* and Wittpenn. Although Fielder was as progressive as Wittpenn, Hague's primary intention was to destroy Wittpenn, and he

* Although New Jersey governors were not permitted to succeed themselves until the adoption of the 1949 Constitution, Fielder, the President of the New Jersey State Senate, had assumed the governorship upon Wilson's election to the White House, and was therefore entitled to run for a full term of his own.

joined forces with Nugent to support the incumbent. To confuse the situation further, Fielder promised to fight against the Nugent machine. This brought President Wilson's support, and to prevent a bloodletting in New Jersey progressive ranks, the President persuaded Wittpenn to withdraw from the race.¹¹ As a result of Fielder's opposition, Nugent supported the Republican candidate, Edward C. Stokes. Fielder, with the Wilsonian progressives in his corner, carried the state, but the results of his victory were deceptive. As Professor Link remarks,

"The truth was, however, that the election of 1913 marked a turning point in the twentieth century political history of New Jersey: a reversion from Democratic insurgency toward a traditional pattern in state politics. While Fielder won the governorship, Nugent remained master of the Essex County machine and Hague extended his control over Hudson County. Hereafter, the Hague-Nugent combination would grow in power until it had won mastery of the Democratic party in New Jersey by 1917."¹²

While Wittpenn directed his efforts on the state level, Hague eagerly grasped for power in Jersey City. In 1900, a commission form of government had rebuilt Galveston, Texas after a hurricane had all but destroyed the city. Progressives and reformers throughout the country hailed this achievement as proof that a commission was "superior to the mayor-council form because each commissioner was directly responsible to the people for the operation of his department."¹³ In 1911, the New Jersey

legislature passed the "Walsh Act," known specifically as "The Commission Form of Government." Under its terms any municipality in New Jersey could adopt the commission form. The option was defeated in Jersey City in 1911, but the provisions of the 1913 election dictated that a commission government must be the result.¹⁴

In the municipal election, held in May while the jockeying in the gubernatorial primary continued, Hague was elected to the five-men commission by coming in fourth. The new commission, which also included A. Harry Moore, elected Mark Fagan for a fourth nonconsecutive term as mayor, and Hague became Public Safety Director. From this vantage point, he persuaded the Hudson County Democratic Committee to rescind "an earlier vote endorsing Wittpenn for governor and urged the election of James Fielder ... This about-face meant that Hague was the acknowledged unopposed leader of the Democratic party in Hudson County."¹⁵ Now, with a commission government and reformer Mark Fagan at the helm again, Jersey City anticipated continued progressivism. The average citizen of Jersey City did not realize that after the 1913 election time had run out for any anti-Hague men. "As it turned out, government by commission abetted rather than blocked him in his march to power."¹⁶

As Public Safety Director, Hague was the Democratic leader in Jersey City. But to become the city's absolute ruler, he was obliged to defeat Fagan in the next election. To this end he employed his new office. First he attempted to cultivate

opposing groups in the city. George Rapport has written,

"The churches were on a crusade to drive vice and corruption from the city, and in Frank Hague they found a highly religious man whose church-group activity could always be depended upon. The women's clubs regarded him as a very moral individual, ... he did not drink, smoke or loiter around saloons. Even the so-called evil groups -- the saloon keepers, gangsters and brothel proprietors -- saw in Frank Hague the strong man who could eliminate police extortion."¹⁷

Next, Hague reformed the graft-ridden and corrupt police department. He had double-edged motives. First, he had to maintain a reform image, especially under the shadow of Mayor Mark Fagan who had become nationally prominent from newspaper and magazine articles written by Lincoln Steffens. Secondly, the police department provided excellent patronage opportunities.¹⁸ Hague installed his own men as policemen, and demanded that they close down brothels and enforce saloon laws. In referring to saloons which permitted prostitutes, he told his men,

"If any of these saloons are under your command, I want you immediately to take the necessary steps to bring about the arrest of the proprietors ... If you do not immediately take steps to drive such places ... out of your district and precinct, I shall proceed immediately to make raids over your head and will prefer charges against anyone responsible."¹⁹

To enforce his dictums, Hague formed an elite squad of plainclothesmen, called the "Zeppelins", who performed in secret, and regulated both the police and civilian law-breakers.

Almost overnight, Hague became a sensation. Prostitutes had disappeared from the streets, petty graft in the police force had been eliminated, and the saloons had become honest again. To the citizens of Jersey City, Hague had wrought a miracle. In higher levels, votes, corporation charters, and favors were still bought and sold with impunity. But the average citizen was unaware of corruption in high places. To him, reform meant what he could see, and he could see the results of Hague's efforts on the streets. "The problem was not corruption but rather how it appeared in the society."²⁰ And by driving out prostitutes and regulating saloons, Hague removed the most visible and most flagrant abuses of society. As a popular hero, Frank Hague girded himself for the final assault upon the bastions of power.

By May 1917, with the municipal elections again at hand, Hague had learned three things which made Mayor Fagan vulnerable. First, he realized that a politician must be flexible and easily susceptible to compromise. Fagan, a sincere reformer, remained unable to change his ideals to further his political ambitions. Secondly, Hague saw that Fagan's support was limited to Jersey City. While Hague had cultivated state politicians in Trenton and the state bosses, Nugent and Smith in Newark, Fagan had concentrated on municipal affairs. For Hague, levels of politics were inseparable; support must be gained from every possible quarter and not simply at home. Finally, Hague devoted

a great deal more time and energy to political organization than Fagan. He realized that elections can be determined by getting out those voters who normally stayed home.²¹

Hague fielded a ticket that included himself, the consistently popular A. Harry Moore, and three relative unknowns, John F. O'Brien, George Bensinger, and Michael I. Fagen.²² By running Michael Fagen against Mayor Mark Fagan, Hague shrewdly employed "the ancient political trick of running candidates with the same name for the same office."²³ This ploy undoubtedly cost the Mayor hundreds of confused votes. Hague labelled his slate "The Unbossed," and proceeded to attack the Republicans headed by Mayor Fagan, and another Democratic group headed by Otto Wittpenn.

During his administration, Fagan's major mistake had been a tactical one. He had planned the construction of new public schools which would cost \$3,000,000. Hague employed this as his chief issue. First he reminded the predominantly Catholic voters of Jersey City that their children would receive a better education in newly planned parochial schools.²⁴ And using himself as a model of economy and thrift in the Street and Water Board days, Hague contended that Fagan's estimate for school construction was too exorbitant. And finally, Hague revived the voters' memories about the absence of brothels and saloon violations.

Hague's political barometer proved correct. The voters responded to his visible brand of reform, and the entire

"Unbossed" slate swept to victory. Both Fagan and Wittpenn were finished as political forces. Fagan, whom Lincoln Steffens described as an "honest, uneducated, human baby ... a humble, Christian soldier,"²⁵ told the famous muckraker bitterly, "Why, it was my Church that finally beat me. They sent the Church after me, and the Church beat me with the people."²⁶ In the election, Moore had run slightly ahead of second-place Hague. But since the commissioners would elect the next mayor, and since all of the newly-elected commissioners were Hague men, Frank Hague was finally assured of the top prize.

By capturing the leadership of Jersey City, Hague stood on the verge of dominating the entire state. He had altered the reform tradition of the Wilsonian progressives. While Wilson, Wittpenn, and Fagan had been concerned with high ideals and reform on all levels of society, Frank Hague concentrated on pleasing the voters with concrete reform on their level. There is no question that Hague was a reformer. Although he employed reform to insure his assumption of power, he, in fact, delivered reform before the eyes of the voters. Nevertheless, Hague cannot be called an extension of the Wilson years, for his refinement of progressivism created a span of bossism unparalleled in American political history. "It has been said that if Woodrow Wilson had not become President of the United States, he might have gone down to defeat in the same way as Mark Fagan ... H. Otto Wittpenn and James Smith -- down to defeat in front of the Hague avalanche."²⁷ Whatever his motives, Frank Hague had, at last, gained the whole pie.

Chapter III.

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CHAPTER IV: THREE GOVERNORS IN A DECADE

CHAPTER IV

May 16, 1917 was a bright, brisk spring day in Jersey City. Uptown, on Journal Square, the Regent theater featured Charlie Chaplin in "The Floor Walker." Blanche Sweet starred in the "Evil Eye" at the Duncan, and Mae Murray played "A Mormon Maid" at the Keith. Downtown, Frank Hague strode into the packed council chambers at City Hall to the roar of an exuberant crowd. With the volume of cheers increasing, Hague was unanimously elected mayor by the new commissioners. The crowd finally relented and silence spread over the chambers as Mayor Hague rose to speak,

"First and foremost is the question of putting the city's streets in proper condition. We are anxious to do our part toward making Jersey City rival, in commercial and industrial development, our sister city, New York ... We invite criticism and suggestion. I hope the people of Jersey City give us as to improvements ... a chance to do what we must."¹

Frank Hague had finally reached the summit. Except for receiving a mandate from the citizens of Jersey City "to do what we must," the rest of his inaugural pledge would remain unfulfilled. Most significantly however, not until 1947 would Jersey City have a new mayor, and not until 1949 would Jersey City elect a mayor who opposed Hague.

Hague now moved to consolidate his power in the state. To gain total control of the Democratic party in New Jersey, Hague needed to eliminate the remaining liberal Democrats who still

espoused Wilsonian ideals. President Wilson, upon his election to the White House, found little time to dabble in Jersey politics, and delegated the job to Joseph Tumulty, his secretary. Tumulty was, perhaps, the only state politician who gauged the Hague threat correctly. Partly because of his loyalty to Wilson, and partly because he desired to seek elective office in New Jersey himself, Tumulty worked energetically to establish a strong liberal faction in the state Democratic party. But he was too late. By 1918, Hague called the shots. When the Wilsonians nominated two liberal Democrats for the U. S. Senate in 1918, Charles O'Connor Hennessy and George La Monte, Hague's Hudson County organization stood by indifferently, and the two were defeated. Hague cared little if his refusal to stump for liberal Democrats caused the election of Republicans. Initially he needed to dominate his own party, and by the end of World War I, "in New Jersey, the Democracy could prosper only on Hague's terms ..."²

But Hague could not rule New Jersey as he ruled Hudson County, until he had elected his own governor. The decision to capture the governor's chair in 1919 stemmed from much more than a bad case of megalomania. After his election as mayor, Hague had given out jobs to insure and extend his control over Hudson County and Jersey City. He offered the best jobs to his old supporters as a reward for their services, and he created new ones to bring the Wittpenn and Fagan voters into his fold. These jobs paid salaries, and new salaries meant that Hague either

had to raise municipal taxes, or assess the railroads and corporations in Jersey City at a higher rate. He chose the latter option because, "the average assessment levied in the rest of the city was \$17,000 per acre, but the tax on railroad property, which covered a good part of the municipality, was only \$3,000 an acre."³ By seeking larger assessments on the railroads, Hague stood to gain considerable tax monies, and at the same time enhance his image of a fighter against big business.

However, when the Jersey City commissioner of finance increased the assessed valuation on railroad property, the State Board of Tax Appeals, influenced by heavy railroad lobbying, cancelled the increase. An infuriated Hague determined to elect his own governor who would appoint Hague men to this and other state boards, and thereby insure that Hague desires became reality.⁴ As his 1919 gubernatorial candidate, Hague selected Hudson County's state senator, Edward I. ("Teddy") Edwards. Edwards, president of the First National Bank of Jersey City, had been a protege of E. F. C. Young, the mentor of the late boss Robert Davis and an organizer of the Public Service Corporation which controlled most of the state's utilities. Notwithstanding, Edwards adopted an anti-corporation stance, and Hague thundered,

"The Republican Party of New Jersey is owned body, boots and breeches by the Public Service Company. I stand with the people against corporations like the Public Service."⁵

The most hotly contested issue of the election, however, turned out to be Prohibition. Hague, realizing that many New Jersey

voters opposed the "noble experiment," steered Edwards on a "wet" course. Edwards, exhibiting the qualities of an admiring pupil, declared himself "a wringing Wet," and pledged that he would make New Jersey "wetter than the Atlantic Ocean."⁶

Edwards first routed state boss Nugent in the Democratic primary which was later described as "a saturnalia of crime, in which the election laws were violated with impunity in Hudson County."⁷

By Edward's primary victory, Frank Hague became the absolute ruler of the state Democratic party. In the general election, the Republican candidate, Newton A. K. Bugbee, "adopted an equivocal attitude on prohibition,"⁸ and promised to stand by the Constitution. This was enough to elect Edwards by a state margin of 14,510. The key to his election, however, was the Hague machine in Hudson County which delivered a two-to-one majority, 58,527 to 23,009, for Edwards. Hague now reigned supreme, and by the end of the decade, enjoyed, "a completer control over the state Democratic machinery than Smith or any other old-line boss."⁹

Hague used the decade of the 1920's to further solidify his power. A minor threat to the stability of his organization occurred in 1920. The electorate was weary of President Wilson's idealism, and a Republican trend was sweeping the country. Even the Hague organization could not insure the election of its county ticket. On a unique occasion in his political career, Hague realized he was impotent. But he

determined to retain the sheriff's office in his fold, because the county sheriff selected grand juries. If Hague controlled the Hudson County grand jury, he was relatively safe from future legal thrusts in spite of any abuses of power. Therefore, he permitted the rest of the county slate to go down to defeat, but geared the entire machine toward the election of the sheriff. The candidate was the old boyhood friend "Skidder" Madigan. "Skidder" could neither read nor write, and employed a campaign slogan which would have difficulty in even grade school elections -- "He was good to his mother." Nevertheless, "Skidder" managed to win on the strength of Hague's "majority that was one hundred per cent stolen."¹⁰

With Edwards esconced in Trenton, Hague quickly made sure that Hague supporters received appointments to state commissions which bore the responsibility for Jersey City's fiscal affairs. Satisfied that no threat to his power would be forthcoming from the state government, Hague built a machine* so powerful that by the end of his first mayoral term, he was invincible. In the 1921 reelection campaign, Hague easily triumphed by again lambasting the Public Service Corporation, and except for one incident, the election proved as unexciting as the easy Hague triumphs in the future.

During the 1921 election, a dozen political science students from Princeton came to Jersey City as poll watchers. Within an hour after the polls had opened, eleven of the students were

* The organization of the Hague machine is treated in Chap. V.

hospital patients. When reporters rushed to Hague, and charged his supporters with the violence, the mayor laughed heartily, and explained,

"Animal spirits, that's all. I told my boys to lay off, but it was a pretty dull election, and they couldn't resist the temptation to have a little fun ... Oh, boy!"¹¹

During the same year, the Republicans in the state legislature fearful of Hague's growing power began an investigation of the situation in Jersey City. The chairman of the investigating committee, State Senator William B. Mackay of Bergen County, denounced Hague for election fraud in the victory of "Skidder" Madigan, and wondered why four policemen received \$8,000 a year for singing in the Police Quartet. Other investigators for the committee reported that in 1921, "official cars were used on an alleged road-inspecting tour which terminated at Toledo, Ohio, the day of the Dempsey-Willard fight."¹² In spite of the charges, other than exhibiting that Mayor Hague enjoyed prizefighting, the Mackay Committee produced no results.

In 1922, when Edwards ended his gubernatorial term, Hague elected the outspoken "wet" to the United States Senate where he remained until 1929, an uninspiring and unoriginal stooge of Hague. To succeed Edwards, Hague nominated and elected a former judge, George S. Silzer. Hague increased the Hudson County plurality in 1922 to 79,905 votes. Silzer, also unabashedly against Prohibition, exhibited a degree of independence

during his term in Trenton and Hague barely managed to keep him in line. When Silzer finished his term in 1925,* Hague coaxed him into a permanent exit from public.

By the gubernatorial election of 1925, Hague prepared to elect his third governor of the decade. For his candidate Hague chose a proven vote-getter and a trusted companion, Jersey City Commissioner A. Harry Moore. In Moore, Hague had finally settled on a politician whom he could depend on, and who acted like a perfect candidate. As the New York Times reported,

"He can talk circles around any other politician in New Jersey. He has joined every social organization that is helpful to a candidate. He is well grounded in the art of public improvements. There is nothing of interest to the average citizen that he can't 'orate' about ... He has a speaking acquaintance with everybody whom he ever met in New Jersey ... Mr. Moore will have a dripping wet platform. No wonder the Republicans are worried."¹³

Moore parlayed his abilities as Hague's greatest candidate into three non-consecutive terms as governor. That record still stands in New Jersey. In Moore's first victory in 1925, Hague increased the Hudson County plurality to 103,000 votes, and maintained that figure almost intact until 1949. After 1925, "Hague's Hundred Thousand" as the traditional majority came to be called, carried New Jersey for Hague gubernatorial and senatorial candidates, and Democratic presidential candidates.

* New Jersey governors were elected to three year terms, until 1949, when a new constitution put a four year term into effect.

When New Jersey Republicans saw a third Hague governor sitting in Trenton, they began to realize that the Mayor of Jersey City represented something more than a temporary phenomenon. As a solution, Jersey Republicans proposed a referendum which would increase the governor's term to four years, and schedule gubernatorial elections in presidential years. Hague defeated the referendum 200,716 to 135,288. The Hudson County plurality was 100,002 votes. That Hague managed to turn out such an incredible vote "on an issue so tenuous to the average voter struck the state as little short of miraculous."¹⁴ Garden State Republicans finally realized who controlled their state, and prepared for the seige. Their negligence at the beginning of the decade forced them to wait for another quarter-century to regain control.

The importance of the governorship in New Jersey cannot be underestimated. Hague employed the office as the vehicle of his statewide leadership. He succeeded because New Jersey's situation was unique,

"Between 1900 and 1910, the state had espoused the reform idea of the short ballot, and had eliminated scores of jobs that had theretofore been elective. The governor had the power to appoint almost every officer in the state government, ranging from the attorney general and the treasurer down to the prosecutors of the individual counties. There were more than eighty different boards and commissions, plus judgeships in fourteen court systems."¹⁵

As long as Hague controlled the governorship, he controlled New Jersey. And Hague men sat in the governor's chair, with one exception, from 1919 to 1940.

But the Governor of New Jersey did not possess absolute power. The legislature still bore responsibility for the passage of bills. Since New Jersey elected its legislature under a rotten borough system in which rural Republicans predominated, Hague could never control it by the same domination he exerted on his own party. He therefore consummated deals with Republican legislators which usually insured passage of most of the bills which Hague desired.* He was helped by Governor Moore's classic plea to the voters, "Do this for my mother."¹⁶

Governor Moore's three terms, although primarily a facade for Hague's state leadership, provided the people of the state with several beneficial results. Moore signed laws which eliminated child labor and sweatshops. His administrations were responsible for the creation of a complete state highway system, the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, and a tenure system for public school teachers. Moore also became involved in the plight of physically handicapped children, and managed to establish a county parks system in New Jersey.¹⁷ Hagueism did not wholly ignore the needs of the citizens.

On the local level during the decade of the 1920's, Hague consolidated and expanded his power by catering to the electorate's desires at critical moments. The coal strike of 1926 serves as a case in point. When the miners in the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania and West Virginia struck during the winter, Jersey

* Hague's relations with the state legislature are treated in detail in Chap. V.

City, along with other communities, found itself without coal. When authorities informed Hague that thousands of people were freezing, and that schools and hospitals were being forced to close, he remembered the surplus coal owned by the numerous railroad lines based in Jersey City. One company, in particular, was in the process of attempting to deliver 25,000 tons of coal outside the city, and sell it at higher prices. Hague instructed his Chief of Police in no uncertain terms,

"You tell your men to stop every damn coal-truck that tries to leave this city."¹⁸

When the manager of the company protested, Hague replied that he derived his authority "by virtue of my office as Mayor."

The manager retorted,

"That is not enough."

Whereupon Hague thundered,

"By the law at the end of a night stick.
How do you like that one?"¹⁹

Hague then forced the company to send 5,000 tons of coal to every police and fire station where Jersey City residents were permitted to buy it for pennies a scuttle. He let the remaining coal leave the city. In a pinch, the poor of Jersey City looked to Hague, and His Honor consistently demonstrated that when he really desired something, either things moved or heads rolled. The poor remembered and showed their appreciation at the polls.*

The end of the decade saw Hague's public image as a reformer destroyed. In 1929, Republicans in the state legislature set up the Case Committee to probe Hague's personal finances and alleged

election fraud. On the first count, Hague simply refused to answer, and the legislature cited him for contempt. Before the state supreme court, Hague's lawyers argued that the legislature was overstepping its bounds in attempting to exercise judicial power. The court accepted the argument. On the question of election fraud, Hague also refused to answer although evidence of wrongdoing was presented to the committee. The committee listened to several witnesses who said they did not sign a Democratic nominating petition on which their names appeared. It also produced a list of "117 voters with a record which the committee's attorney said showed prima facie evidence of violation of the election law."²⁰ The evidence was clear and unchallenged by Hague. The mayor stayed within the bounds of the law on the strength of his attorneys' legal technicality. His reputation, however, was permanently tarnished by his refusal to disprove the committee's findings. People now realized that Frank Hague was smart and powerful enough to avoid prosecution, but was probably guilty of the accusations leveled against him.

When the decade ended, Frank Hague sat in his office in city hall more firmly entrenched than ever. He had dominated state politics by electing three governors, and the future promised that Hague's power in this respect held unlimited potential. His reputation had suffered, but he could be satisfied that it took more than ten years for his opponents to accurately gauge the Hague threat. Since all quarters now regarded the Mayor of Jersey City as a ruthless boss, he would, in the future, ignore attempts at deception and would openly proceed in the tyrannical manner of which his enemies accused him. By 1930, everyone realized that Frank Hague was around to stay.

Chapter IV

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CHAPTER V: "HAGUE'S HUNDRED THOUSAND"

CHAPTER V

Frank Hague worked long and hard to perfect the techniques of his political machine. On many occasions the press enjoyed comparing Hague to other contemporary bosses, Prendergast, Kelly, Nash, and Crump. Like the rest Hague totally dominated his organization by permitting no competition, and refusing to groom anyone to succeed him. Also, with several other urban bosses, Hague was satisfied to exercise control from the mayor's office, ignoring numerous offers of the governorship or a seat in the United States Senate. He differed from the rest in the fear he evoked from his constituency. As one of his obituaries phrased it,

"... Hague was hated and feared, and the secret of his power was that he was feared more than he was hated. Simply by presenting to the public eye his natural, unlovable self, Frank Hague helped destroy the dangerous American myth of the lovable and somehow admirable political boss."¹

Arrogant, domineering, and merciless, Frank Hague's unique contribution to the history of political bossism in the United States was the almost incredible fear on which he based his power.

The first duty of a machine is to get out the vote and insure that that vote is friendly. In this respect Hague excelled. Throughout his tenure, Jersey City's political pattern consisted of 12 wards and 240 election precincts. Each ward had a leader, and each precinct had a committeeman to get out the qualified voters on election day. If Hague had conducted all

elections legally in Jersey City, he probably would have remained in power regardless. Frank Kingdon, an enthusiastic New Dealer and friend of President Roosevelt, once asked for F. D. R.'s help in defeating Hague. The President, dependent upon Hague majorities in New Jersey, was understandably embarrassed by the request. He asked, "So you think I ought to take a stand against Hague?"

Kingdon replied affirmatively.

F. D. R. then asked, "If there were a completely free election in Jersey City tomorrow, without any undue pressure, so that the people could elect for mayor anybody they wished, who would get it?"

Kingdon ended the conversation and tabled his own request by answering, "Frank Hague would."²

But Hague chose to avoid election night uncertainties and so managed Jersey City elections that he could predict vote totals weeks ahead of time. As one of Hague's foes put it, "What went in the ballot box never came out. If Hague had run against Jesus Christ, he would have gotten 90% of the vote."³ First, the Hague machine registered some voters either from entirely fictitious places of residence or "vacant lots, saloons, boat houses, and rooming houses where they had never lived."⁴ Furthermore, aided by New Jersey permanent registration law, the Hague machine registered dead people, persons who had moved away, patients in mental institutions, and Irish relatives who had yet to emigrate.⁵ In 1944, reporters from the New Republic analyzed registration totals of the previous ten years, and

made the following astonishing conclusions,

"Hague has always been able to do amazing things with a ballot box. Voting strength in Hudson County has little relation to population ... In 1930, the population of Hudson County was 690,730. There were 295,558 registered voters. In 1940, the population had dropped to 625,000, a decrease of 7 percent. Yet the number of registered voters was 376,469, or an increase of 35 percent!"⁶

Thus, in any given election campaign, the Hague machine could begin with an estimated 75,000 legally nonexistent votes (fondly referred to in Jersey City by oldtimers as the "cemetery vote") in its fold.⁷

Having registered the voters according to its needs and desires, the Hague machine spared no trick in getting voters to the polls. Hague realized that, on average, only 60% of the New Jersey electorate turned out to vote.⁸ He gave voting lists to the wardleaders and committeemen, and instructed them to make sure that all registered voters went to the polls. If a wardleader was derelict in this task he was simply replaced, and sometimes told to find residence outside of Jersey City. On election day, each wardleader received money with which to induce wavering voters, and a fleet of cars to transport the sick and aged to the polling places. To carry out these duties, it has been estimated that Hague employed 30,000 workers on election day.⁹

His Honor spent election day at his office in city hall. He "received hourly reports from each district. A district leader failing to report got a quick call from Hague."¹⁰ He kept a

battery of lawyers at city hall directed by his chief legal aide, John Milton, in the event of any legal threats from the state elections boards. Hague, with a personal knowledge of every polling precinct in Jersey City, directed the entire vote-getting effort. In front of him he kept charts of every ward, and received hourly reports of vote totals from the time the polls opened. With an amazing grasp of his hometown, he knew almost exactly how each neighborhood would vote, and what was needed to keep that vote in line. On one occasion, he pointed to a ward on his charts, and told a Newark reporter,

"You see that district? Notice that the vote by ten o'clock last year was twice what it was this year. The chart shows the reason. There's a church right across the street from that polling place. Last year, Election Day fell on a Holy Day of Obligation, and we got them just as they came out of church."¹¹

To prevent potential overthrow, Hague harbored a mania for getting out the vote of the entire organization in every type of election. It mattered little if the contest was a trivial referendum or a primary in which the Hague candidate received no opposition. And the organization responded in every instance making "Hague's Hundred Thousand" a catchword in the state. Hague's most spectacular campaign came in 1937, when he was reelected for the sixth time by 110,743 to 6,798. "In 1941, Hague needed, under the Walsh Act, only 766 signatures to nominate him for his seventh term as mayor. The organization collected 125,371."¹² Hague made every election appear as if it were the

ultimate test of his power. Throughout an election, Hague would harrange crowds at an uptown auditorium called "The Grotto," yelling, "Three hundred and sixty-four days a year I work for you. Now this one day I ask you to work for me."¹³

Often, reporters wondered why the Hudson County Bureau of Elections permitted Hague irregularities. Once, Election Superintendent John Ferguson was asked where his 1,300 deputies had been during a disputed election. Ferguson replied,

"Where were my deputies? Some of them were locked up in the police station; some were stuck on corners, with the threat that if they moved from there, a night stick would be wrapped around their necks ..."¹⁴

The greatest irregularities came before the advent of voting machines. Although Hague could not tamper with the machines as readily as with paper ballots, his enormous pluralities were not greatly diminished. The great majority of the people of Jersey City feared Hague enough to vote for him on their own. Nonetheless, when paper ballots were still in operation, Hague demanded such high majorities that numerous illegalities occurred. As Ralph G. Martin has written,

"Opposition ballots were made invalid by smudging or tearing them. More simply, an opposition vote was erased and changed. And, most conveniently of all, they simply were counted the way they were needed ... Challengers were shoved out of the polling place, or to the other side of the room, while the Hague men clustered around the ballot-counter to give him greater privacy. Since the law supposedly required the counter to read aloud

each vote, many of them developed throat trouble on Election Day, which lowered their voices to whispers."¹⁵

Hague operated quite like a professional gangster in elections. No threat was a bluff. If a friendly wardheeler or an enemy persisted in ignoring Hague's bidding, he was beaten up, usually by the police, and then thrown out of Jersey City. With the specter of violence in the background, Hague rewarded the faithful with food baskets at Christmas time, with free coal when the temperature dropped, and with boat rides and picnics during the summer. He made sure that for their efforts in November, Hague supporters received concrete benefits at a minimum expense to himself and the machine. The Mayor would defend his techniques by saying, "A truly representative organization never sleeps. I am a typical American, and this is a typical American city. The man who can't play politics can't sit in at the game."¹⁶

Hague eliminated any threat from the Hudson County newspapers early in his tenure. The newspapers (Hudson Dispatch, Jersey Journal, and Jersey Observer) had a limited circulation in the populous area they served because the large New York dailies sold well in New Jersey. Nonetheless, they played an influential, if subdued, role in Jersey City. The Jersey Journal was owned and operated by the wealthy, Protestant Joseph A. Dear family which bitterly despised Hague's gutter tactics. Early in the 1920's,

the newspaper accurately reported Hague's boss rule, and strongly denounced him in its editorials. Hague immediately raised the Jersey Journal's tax assessment from \$375,000 to \$550,000. He also withdrew all municipal notices from the paper, having full knowledge that the municipal notices provided the Journal its chief source of revenue. The Mayor further ordered all police and firemen to get four subscriptions for the rival Jersey Observer, and threatened all theaters with closing from fire violations if they refused to withdraw their advertising from the Journal. Hague finally induced Journal support after Hague Assemblyman Joseph McDermott introduced impeachment proceedings in the legislature against the publisher, Joseph A. Dear who held a seat on the Court of Appeals.¹⁷ For the next twenty-five years, the newspapers of Hudson County either openly supported Hague, or tamely ignored issues on which they opposed him. The newspapers became so docile, that an observer commented, "It seems safe to say that no other American boss has ever obtained such complete control of the press in his territory or held it so long."¹⁸

Hague also received no opposition from Republicans. The Republican party in Hudson County was simply an extension of the Hague machine. When Republicans began opposing Hague early in his administration, he quickly quieted them with a unique maneuver. New Jersey law dictates that a voter must abstain from one primary if he wishes to change parties. Hague instructed half of his organization to miss one primary and then register as Republicans. He then was able to control the next Republican primary, and

nominated his own men for Republican candidacies. When the primary was over, the "One-day Republicans" would miss another primary and reregister as Democrats.

Hague next extended his control to elements of the Republican party on the state level. If Hague thought a particular Republican candidate would present reelection difficulties for his own gubernatorial candidates such as A. Harry Moore, he would instruct his "One-day Republicans" to vote for a less qualified Republican candidate in the primary. "As a consequence, when Republicans are exulting in the candidacy of some high-class citizen, they wake in the morning to find that their actual nominee is a pushover. Mr. Hague isn't surprised."¹⁹ The "Hague Republican" would be duly nominated by the party, and would be so poorly qualified and unattractive that Hague Democrat A. Harry Moore would win handsomely. When regular Republicans objected to the practice, Hague replied,

"What's wrong with it? The law gives us the right. And my boys have got just as much right to be independent as Norris or LaFollette, haven't they? And say, if we didn't vote Republican now and then, the poor suckers would have to call off their primaries on account of poor attendance. A bunch of cry babies, that's what they are. Just amateurs. Hunting for alibis, that's all. We get our votes on the square because we're on the square with the people."²⁰

A perfect example of "One-day Republicanism" was the 1928 gubernatorial primary. The favored Republican was Judge Robert Carey, a Hague critic. But 20,000 "Republicans" in Hudson County voted for a "colorless" and unknown state senator named

Morgan Larson.²¹ Larson won the primary, and went on to defeat and oblivion in November. Enraged Republicans decided that perhaps they could live with Hague.

In the legislature, Republicans began to support Hague-sponsored measures when they discovered that the grateful boss freely distributed jobs to legislators' relatives regardless of party affiliation. Enough Republican legislators adopted this political philosophy so that "not even a Republican governor would appoint a Hague enemy to a political post."²² Although nominally and predominantly Democratic, the boss system, in Hague's case, very clearly became "bipartisan."²³

An election board, which was technically bipartisan under New Jersey law, seldom responded to alleged irregularities on Hague's part. For, particularly in Hudson County, Hague made sure that the election boards were filled with Hague Democrats and sympathetic Republicans. The situation became so blatantly one-sided that in 1939 Chief Justice Thomas J. Brogan of the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered Hudson County Registration Commissioner Charles E. Stoebling to oust 555 of the county's 1,316 Republican District Board officers, a majority of whom were Stoebling adherents after it had been charged that they were not genuine Republicans.²⁴ Only later, in the 1940's, would a legislature dominated by regular Republicans be able to appoint real Republicans to the election boards. Even then, Hague was so firmly installed and fear of him was so great, that his majorities "were almost as huge as ever."²⁵

Hague financed his organization through three methods; graft, real estate deals, and bookmaking. First, every officeholder

in Hudson County was assessed three per cent of his salary which went either to the machine's coffers, or to Hague's pocket. This practice became known as the "Three Per Cent Rake-Off" or the "Three Per Cent Club." The Hague machine also realized a three per cent return in municipal purchasing. On some purchasing, the machine received "flat per-item fees ... such as fifty cents a barrel on cement."²⁶ Officeholders who held high-salaried positions were assessed fifteen or twenty per cent, and all employees were required to donate additional monies during election emergencies. Sometimes the Hague machine was unsatisfied with the basic three per cent graft in purchasing, and municipal contractors received inflated contracts in order to make the necessary kick-back. For instance, in 1928, a garbage contractor, James J. McFeely, was hired to remove garbage for \$486,260, a sum that was "three hundred per cent higher than the amount the city paid for the same work in the previous five years. It was also developed that bids at a lower price were rejected ..."²⁷ It has been estimated that the Hague machine received between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 a year from the "rake-off." *

Hague also employed real estate deals to fatten the machine treasury. "Dummy corporations headed by shadowy figures in New York bought land shortly before Jersey City or Hudson County condemned it, and resold it at fabulous prices."²⁸ Thomas J. Fleming records that one of these deals netted \$628,145 between 1919 and 1924.²⁹

The third method of obtaining money, and probably the most lucrative, was the machine-sponsored bookmaking operation in Hudson County. Jersey City became known as the "Horse Bourse," and Hague was known as "the book." Hague personally controlled the gambling operation, and completely kept the mob out of Jersey City. To his credit, it can be said that at a time when other cities were reeling under the control of mobsters such as Al Capone, Hague made sure that the mob could not even gain a foothold in Jersey City. Hague appointed bookmakers who made bets on horse races all over the United States and Canada. "Charlie" Good was the head bookmaker. In Hudson County, Good installed one thousand private telephone lines to the tracks. The telephone company, knowing what their purpose would be, quietly installed the telephones. Hague charged the bookies \$50.00 for each line. He kept \$25.00 for himself, and gave the other half to the consenting officials of the telephone company. In addition, a thriving numbers racket flourished, and machine sponsored card games provided both recreation and revenue.³⁰ No one has ever been able to accurately estimate the enormous profits from these gambling operations. Although the Case Committee investigated the alleged bookmaking operation, nothing could be proven. And Mayor Hague correctly and triumphantly remarked,

"The whole state was told that all sorts of corruption, malfeasance and embezzlement would be uncovered when I went on the stand. And what happened? Not a single instance of official wrongdoing was exposed!"³¹

Although the unofficial record shows that Hague was as greedy as any leader in American public life, he sometimes exhibited surprising benevolence. One year, during the depression, Hague did not insist on collecting the three per cent "rake-off," but forced city employees to take a ten per cent cut in their salaries, and donate an additional \$220,000. With the money, Hague bought "food and clothing, rent and coal" for the severely depressed poor of Jersey City.³² Whether benevolence or an anticipation of future votes guided his actions, the Mayor made sure that no one starved in Jersey City.

Hague determined that January 1st should be a day of public homage to himself. At city hall, on every New Year's Day from 1917 to 1947, Mayor Hague met the party faithful. "No matter how hung-over he may have been by year-end whoopee, every faithful job holder dragged his bones into the cold to stand in an immense line, which wound around City Hall three or four times, inching slowly forward into the lobby and up the steps to the Mayor's office."³³ There Hague, in a morning suit and surrounded by his highest lieutenants, shook hands with every greeter. It was as important for a city employee to be present at this ritual as it was to vote correctly. Hague took this public display of affection seriously, even if some of it was feigned.

In one area of political activity, Hague fell short of complete control. Although on occasion he could exercise decisive influence over it, Hague never totally dominated the state

legislature. The New Jersey legislature, which stays in session almost continuously, was elected by a rotten borough system which favored the rural areas of the state, and insured almost constant Republican control. Hague responded to this unfavorable situation by imposing tight discipline upon the Democratic members, and wooing wavering Republicans by offers of jobs in important agencies.

Hague's liaison in the legislature was a Jersey City judge who was not a member of the legislature named Louis Paladeau. Hague telephoned orders to Paladeau from Jersey City, and Paladeau would pass them on to Hague Democrats in the Assembly and the State Senate. He had a unique system for communicating his desires. The Hague delegation in each house always had a member whose name began with an A. Paladeau transmitted the orders to this member (sometimes using hand motions during a roll call), and the rest of the Hague delegation voted according to the first member's lead. Republican Governor Walter Edge, who favored a piece of utility legislation which Hague opposed in 1945, commented, "Such was the party discipline in Hague's organization that even influential Democrats in the Senate, recognized as among the ablest men in the state, voted in opposition although informing me privately that they favored the bill."³⁴

Although never able to master the legislature, Hague effectively balanced factions and often succeeded in persuading opposition members to vote for favorable legislation. The

legislature was not vital to Hague's ends. If it had been, judging from his record in other areas, he would have worked hard to discover some technique to dominate it. In fact, the legislature, "shorn by the courts of its power to investigate,"³⁵ was not nearly as important as the governors Hague managed to elect, and the judges and state agency officials which they, in turn, appointed.

While Hague could not elect every United States Senator from New Jersey between 1917 and 1947, he totally controlled Hudson County's seat in the House of Representatives. His voice in Congress after 1924 was Congresswoman Mary Norton. In 1920, Hague, a firm believer in gaining the women's vote by employing female candidates, placed Miss Norton on the Democratic State Committee. Impressed by her oratorical skill and a ready desire to accede to his wishes, Hague elected her to Congress four years later. Since her seat was as safe as any Southern Democrat's, Miss Norton served thirteen terms and gained the chairmanship of the House Labor Committee. In 1942, when William H. Smathers, a Hague supporter, was defeated for reelection to the United States Senate, Congresswoman Norton became the chief dispenser of patronage for New Jersey. Since she agreed with Hague on every issue and supported all of his programs, he did not interfere with her functions in Congress.³⁶

Frank Hague possessed a genuine genius for surrounding himself with exceptional subordinates, and guiding them to work

his will. As Governor Edge wrote in his memoirs,

"Over the years I have had to admire the ability of Hague to select the right man for the job and to extract every possible element of value from a given situation. While we were always political opponents, many times I wished some of the capable men in the Hague organization were on my side ... When it came to a tight problem I have never met men more ready or more facile in working out a solution in the common interest than Hague's lieutenants."³⁷

With almost no exceptions, Hague kept the people around him as poor and as uninfluential as possible to prevent challengers. If any officeholder attempted to "shakedown" another, and Hague discovered it, he was immediately fired. Although John Milton, the legal aide, and Deputy Mayor John Malone enjoyed Hague's highest confidence, he kept his other followers on the same low level to prevent jealousy and to insure that the machine operated at peak efficiency.

While trustworthy members of the organization led an easy life, Hague was merciless with opponents. "Any critic of His Honor was likely to find his tax assessment raised, his right to vote impugned, and he was lucky, indeed, if he wasn't arrested for fraudulent voting, or gambling, or any of a dozen other offenses."³⁸ But if a critic displayed any talent which Hague thought might be useful such as oratorical ability, he would absorb him with a job on the county payroll.³⁹

Hague inspired loyalty largely through fear. Few members of the organization remained loyal from any sense of devotion.

Both Hague supporters and opponents possessed only two options. If they "played ball" with Hague, they were assured of a relatively comfortable and steady job. On the other hand, if they refused to cooperate with the Mayor, they and their families experienced harassment from the city administration which ran the gauntlet from city inspectors inventing health violations in their homes to policemen arbitrarily and brutally arresting them. A popular saying in Jersey City went, "If you're right with your ward leader you don't need a lawyer."⁴⁰

Even loyal party workers operated in an atmosphere of impending doom. A former Hague committeeman who is now a high Hudson County official and chose to remain nameless told the following story. During the 1930's, he and several other precinct workers were summoned to the Mayor's office. They were deliberately made to wait for two hours. Finally, "Joe" Collins, the Mayor's secretary, saw the committeeman in Hague's outer office, and asked, "How come you had six Republican votes when you only have two registered Republican votes in your precinct?" The committeeman explained that the other four votes came from an Italian shoemaker's family which was bitter at not being able to land jobs on the county payroll. Collins replied, "If you like your job, you'd better get that Italian shoemaker back into the Democratic fold." The committeeman was then escorted to another waiting room, anticipating that now he would see the Mayor. Instead, the others who had come with him were also subjected to Collins's interrogation, and all left city hall without a glimpse of Mayor Hague.⁴¹

The enormous fear it instilled made the Hague machine unique in American history. In municipal and county affairs its control was total for its influence was vertical. It existed in every Jersey City institution, from lodges and clubs to medical societies. Although its leaders mouthed the usual Democratic platitudes about government's role in helping the poor, the Hague machine represented no particular ideology other than an intense, almost pathological, demand to retain and expand its power. Its character completely reflected the character of its absolute monarch, and it acted only when and how he wished it to act. It clearly seemed closer to a form of European tyranny which its forbears had escaped than American democracy. Quite like the corporate monopolies which it had denounced in order to gain power initially, the Hague machine successfully spread its shadow over a great part of a state which realized the essence of the threat only too late.

Frank Hague liked winning. But better than winning, he liked winning big. It was his life. It seems almost absurd to conclude that the mayor of a large American city devoted all of his time and effort every four years for a half-century so that he could sit back on election night genuinely elated that 95% of the people had returned him to office. But it is not far from the truth.

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI: BENEVOLENT DESPOT

CHAPTER VI

Frank Hague ruled Jersey City in the same manner he ran his political machine. He applied a similar system of rewards for services, and gave the people of Jersey City splendid municipal institutions at spectacular tax rates. Frank Hague's consuming interest in life was politics, and most especially political victory. However, a second, almost as strong, interest was providing medical and social care for those unable to afford it. From his youth in the Horseshoe, he had cherished an ambition to gain power so that he could eliminate the suffering he and his family had experienced. In fulfilling this ambition he built an enormous medical complex for the people of Jersey City, and operated it in such a progressive manner that showed his thinking to be far ahead of his time in the field of social services. Jersey City paid an extraordinarily high price for Frank Hague's ambition, but, if its citizens lived in fear of political reprisal, they never feared for their health and safety.

Hague's genuine concern for the social needs of his people stemmed from the intense poverty he suffered as a child. As a mourner at Hague's funeral recalled, "Frank Hague had a side that not too many people knew. I remember the times he used to talk about his mother giving birth on the kitchen table -- and how he was determined that other mothers in this city would have a decent place to bring forth children."¹ In 1921 Hague seriously proposed to the Hudson County Board of Freeholders that the county build a maternity hospital in Jersey City. The board,

dominated by such Hague appointments as future Congresswoman Mary Norton, readily agreed. Construction began, and less than a decade later the first unit of the future medical center was completed.

The Mayor named the institution after his mother, the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital. The entire cost for grounds, building, and equipment was \$1,800,000. The hospital had 275 beds and provided "the very best of service ... including classes for expectant mothers, clinics for special dental, heart, or tubercular patients, and nurses who visit homes after the patients are discharged from the hospital."² A \$35.00 fee was charged for delivery, but remained uncollected if the patient said she could not afford it.

Hague hired Dr. Samuel Cosgrove, an outstanding east coast obstetrician, as medical director and never interfered with his decisions.³ At its peak, Margaret Hague Maternity had the highest birth rate of any hospital in the world, averaging 500 babies per month, and enjoyed a death rate of mothers and babies as low as the average for private hospitals.⁴ Since many patients did not pay the fees, the hospital operated at a constant deficit with the county paying the uncollected expenses.

In addition to the maternity hospital, in the following decade, Hague managed to complete the seven skyscraper Medical Center which consisted of: the Surgical Building, the Medical Building, the Psychiatric Hospital, the Hudson County Tuberculosis Hospital, the staff house, and the nurses' home. The additions to the Medical Center cost \$25,000,000 financed, in part, through

Public Works Administration funds.* The Medical Center was described as the "finest in the country if not in the world."⁵ And in size, it was outranked only by New York's Bellevue and Chicago's Cook County Hospitals.⁶

To secure the very best possible medical director for his Medical Center, Hague sent Jersey City doctors around the country while he personally searched the New York area. Finally the Mayor was advised to see Dr. George V. O'Hanlon, director of Bellevue and allied hospitals in New York City. At first O'Hanlon refused, but after two years of Hague's convincing efforts he accepted. Hague also desired an outstanding director for his nursing school, and induced Miss Jesse Murdoch, director of nurses at New York City's Postgraduate Hospital, to come to the Medical Center.⁷

Hague built beautiful accommodations for the doctors and nurses, complete with swimming pools and tennis courts, at a time when most large city hospitals, like Bellevue, offered poor staff quarters. He hired a New York hotel chef and provided a superb cuisine for the staff. Hague explained these benefits by saying, "If these people have a nice place to live, to relax, to eat, they'll do a better job on my patients."⁸

During the Medical Center's construction Hague keenly followed every move. Often he instructed the architect, John Rowland, "John, I don't like those windows, they look too much like a hospital so take 'em out." He told Rowland to make the hospital entrance "one long expanse of marble, like a fine hotel," and demanded that the elevator doors be made of "cherry brass."⁹

* See Appendix A for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's dedication speech at the Medical Center.

Also, Hague delighted in visiting the wards and talking to the patients. If some patient suffered a peculiar problem, the Mayor unhesitatingly called in his own private physicians for consultation.¹⁰

Through the years, Hague hired the finest surgeons such as the German Dr. Edgar Burke, and insisted that each patient have the most competent and skillful medical care available.¹¹ When critics accused him of wasting county funds for free service to persons who could afford it, Hague replied, "If they say they cannot pay, that is good enough for me... We do not argue with a sick person."

"If the patient is trying to get something for nothing, notwithstanding his ability to pay?" a critic persisted.

"My God, he is welcome to be restored to health!"

"At the expense of the other taxpayers?"

"Of anybody, of anybody. When you give me a sick man I will restore him to health at anyone's cost."¹²

Hague's critics, particularly Dayton David McKean, accused him of making the Medical Center an enormous political football. They charged that the doctors were "constantly hampered by the political control over them,"¹³ and claimed that Hague's staff accommodations were simply a "rich man's club"¹⁴ for political supporters. It is true that the Medical Center, with thousands of employees, provided a politician's patronage dream. However, Hague was so genuinely concerned with the needs of the patients that he permitted no political deadwood to work in the Medical

Center.¹⁵ Contemporary witnesses with a firsthand knowledge of Medical Center affairs testify that Hague never interfered with the doctors, and moreover, harbored a great respect for them.¹⁶ Both Dr. O'Hanlon and Miss Murdoch remained at their posts as long as Hague remained mayor, and both, medical professionals and not political hacks, strenuously denied allegations of interference.* Accurate testimony from the staff of the Medical Center reveals that Hague literally went out of his way to accomodate them, and immediately secured whatever medical technological help they deemed necessary.¹⁷

While charges of overspending and burdening the taxpayers with extremely high rates are true, Hague's critics, in a rare instance, miscalculated his motives. Hague never denied the exorbitant expense,

"Yeah, I reckon we could have done it cheaper, but what of it? Being poor is bad enough, but being poor and sick is hell. They're right about the staff houses being pretty swell, but this is the way I figured it. If the nurses and the docs sleep in a good bed in a nice room, and tuck away a fine, well-cooked breakfast, they're going to take a feeling of cheerfulness into the wards. Follow me?"¹⁸

Hague sincerely felt a responsibility for the poor, and practiced a program which, with variations, would one day be called medicare long before such notions were acceptable. The critics, angered and revulsed by Hague's political tactics, linked all of Hague's programs with his machine and, in this case, erred. Certainly,

* see Appendix B for Miss Murdoch's unpublished account of her relations with Hague.

the Medical Center helped Hague politically. The citizens of Jersey City could view it as a reward for supporting Hague. But Hague's motives were not political. A true ambition to help people avoid his own difficult upbringing inspired Hague's entire medical complex.

Hague also possessed a special interest in children. At the same time he constructed the Medical Center, he built a school for crippled children and named it after his three term governor, A. Harry Moore. The school provided facilities for 200 children and included a solarium, treatment rooms, rest rooms, and a special gymnasium.¹⁹ For the rest of his life Hague took great pride in this school, which he fondly referred to in his somewhat garbled syntax as "the Crippled School for Kiddies."²⁰

The Mayor paid particular attention to the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. Poignantly aware that these boys faced the same problems and followed the same course of action he had in the Horseshoe, Hague created a Bureau of Special Service in Jersey City to deal with juvenile lawbreakers. He told his police, "There is no such thing as a bad boy. You just look at breaking and entering and larceny, not if he's hungry. Look at his background."²¹ He instructed Jersey City's finest that every policeman was an employee of the Bureau, and instead of arresting the youths, they should bring them to the Bureau's offices where a pschyatrist and social workers would care for them. The Bureau was so successful that between 1930 and 1934

juvenile court cases dropped from 897 to 116.²² Hague's program for juvenile delinquency gained national applause and is considered to be one of the first modern approaches to the program. Taking boys from the slums, Hague treated them with the kindness they deserved but had never received. Years later, Hague's famous reply to a magistrate's imposing prison terms on two delinquent boys, "I am the law in Jersey City," was misconstrued by the press and used to the Mayor's disadvantage.

Frank Hague's schemes for the social betterment of his people revealed that he was an original and far-sighted thinker in this field. But, as well as helping the people of Jersey City, they cost a great deal. The expense of operating a huge medical complex and associated services coupled with increasing graft which financed the political machine, imposed a great tax burden and debt on Jersey City.

In 1917, when Hague assumed the mayoralty, the tax rate in Jersey City was \$21.00 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.²³ In 1940, nine years before the Hague machine was overthrown, the tax rate had risen to \$52.98 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, "and assessed valuations average at least 100 per cent of true valuations."²⁴ Other American cities of equal size charged an average rate of \$29.50. In comparison investigators discovered,

"It costs fifteen times as much to govern Jersey City with 300,000 people as it does to govern Akron with 260,000. It costs four times as much to govern Jersey City as it does Kansas City, which has 400,000

population ... Cincinnati ... one-third larger than Jersey City, it is governed for only one-third as much. The government of St. Louis, twice as big as Jersey City, costs about half as much."²⁵

These figures made Jersey City, under Hague's rule, the most expensive place to live in the United States for a city its size. The enormous cost of government derived from construction of municipal institutions, a highly padded public payroll, and inflated municipal contracts which resulted in graft.

With such high governing costs, Jersey City also fell into the category of one of the most bankrupt cities in the United States. In 1938 Jersey City had a gross bonded debt of \$75,000,000, and, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce, a net bonded debt of \$93,317,513.²⁶ Again comparing,

"Cincinnati ... has a net bonded debt of \$35,334,617, and the comparable figure for Indianapolis, slightly larger than Hague's metropolis, is as low as \$9,258,320."²⁷

Such poor financial management of a city made up of relatively poor working class citizens caused severe difficulties especially during the depression years of the 1930's. The depression particularly damaged Jersey City's economy, decreasing the value of manufactured production from \$312,000,000 in 1929 to \$206,000,000 in 1935.²⁸ Jersey City would have become totally bankrupt had it not been for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal aid. From 1932 to 1937, Hague managed to keep the city alive with the help of \$40,000,000 from the federal government.²⁹ Hague also pressured local banks for loans and small interest rates. Although

he was the chief source of the financial disaster, it must be said that when the crisis came, Hague skillfully employed every means at his disposal and survived.

By the mid-1930's, the citizens of Jersey City realized that their mayor ruled his domain with a curious blend of benevolence and tyranny. The people were taxed severely, but all knew that if a sudden crisis arose their mayor would deal with it. Even the poorest rested secure in the knowledge that if starvation and sickness knocked at the door, Mayor Hague would come through. At the very least, history can record that Frank Hague kept his constituency alive and healthy, if not abundantly happy.

CHAPTER VI

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CHAPTER VII: FROM SMITH TO TRUMAN

CHAPTER VII

As New Jersey's most powerful vote broker, Frank Hague quickly gained national prominence and influence. In the forefront of the urban bosses, he significantly helped determine the electoral fate of the national Democratic party for more than a quarter of a century. He played a major and increasingly decisive role in every Democratic convention from 1920 to 1948. Moreover, the Mayor of Jersey City enjoyed the continued confidence and protection of the twentieth century's greatest Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

James Smith, the powerful New Jersey Democratic boss, refused to seat Hague, his rival, as a delegate to the 1916 convention, but Hague returned four years later as the leader of the New Jersey delegation for Cox. After the 1920 debacle, Hague was instantly attracted to a New York Irishman with a similar background, Al Smith. Through Smith's influence, Hague was appointed vice-chairman of the Democratic national committee in 1924, and became the "Happy Warrior's" floor manager at the Madison Square Garden convention. William G. McAdoo, the convention's early frontrunner, "told a close friend that the one man who had caused his defeat was Frank Hague."¹ After the convention, Hague loyally supported John W. Davis, and managed to give him a small Hudson County plurality while Coolidge handsomely carried the rest of the state.

In 1928 Hague again led the Smith forces to the Democratic conclave in Houston. But Smith's advisors stressed "that there

could not have been a more unfortunate choice from the standpoint of bringing Smith rural support,"² and the candidate turned to Franklin D. Roosevelt as his alternative choice. Hague was enraged at Roosevelt but continued in Smith's successful effort. After the nomination had been secured, Hague returned home to enthusiastically campaign for Smith. Although again involved in a losing statewide cause, he registered a 54,000 vote Hudson County plurality for the New York governor.

Four years later, determined as ever that Smith represented the Democratic party's best hopes, Hague plunged into the 1932 campaign effort. Smith had decided to run again partially on Hague's advice which sentimentally maintained that Smith's prospects were even better than four years before.³ Hague, as the national committee's vice-chairman, was instrumental in bringing the convention to Chicago, while Roosevelt had "wished to avoid Chicago or Atlantic City where the wringing Wet bosses Cermak or Hague might pack the galleries with hooting, hostile mobs."⁴

Roosevelt had gauged the situation accurately. Hague and the other Smith bosses like Chicago's Kelly and New York's Curry did indeed pack the convention galleries with anti-F.D.R. crowds, and managed to prevent Roosevelt's gaining a 2/3 vote for the first three ballots.⁵ But Hague and the Smith forces had destroyed themselves earlier when Hague made his famous statement,

"... Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, if nominated, has no chance of winning at the election in November. I have felt out public sentiment, not alone here but in practically every state in the union, particularly those states east of the Mississippi, and I am brought to the

conclusion that he cannot carry a single state east of the Mississippi and very few in the Far West. I am genuinely interested because the tendency of the people of New Jersey has been to support the Republican national ticket in Presidential years. It is only fair as the leader of the party in New Jersey to predict that if Governor Roosevelt is nominated our state will be in the Republican column ... Why consider the one man who is weakest in the eyes of the rank and file?"⁶

The delegates knew that whomever they nominated would in all probability gain the White House in November, and Hague's remarks represented an ultimate slur, for he insinuated that Roosevelt "would be a 'push-over' for Mr. Hoover."⁷

James Farley, F.D.R.'s campaign manager, coolly replied,

"Governor Roosevelt's friends have not come to Chicago to criticize, cry down, or defame any Democrat from any part of the country. This, I believe, is sufficient answer to Mr. Hague's statement."⁸

Hague, having been properly rebuffed, continued to campaign for Smith. By the end of the third ballot it became apparent that Smith could not win, and only a coalition candidate such as John Nance Garner of Texas could stop Roosevelt. Hague offered to switch his 36 New Jersey votes to Garner, but it was too late, and F. D. R. won the nomination on the fourth ballot.

When the delegates left Chicago, it looked as if Hague, the most vehement of the anti-F.D.R. crowd, had cut his own throat. But Hague, as consummately skillful as ever, offered one of the most amazing political apologies in Democratic annals. While

Roosevelt went to Massachusetts in the latter part of the summer, Hague telephoned Farley, vacationing in Atlantic City. He told Farley that there was no soreness on his part since he had been beaten in a fair fight, and if the Democratic candidate would open his campaign in New Jersey he would stage the largest political rally ever held in the United States.⁹

Roosevelt agreed, and at the end of August delivered his maiden campaign speech at Sea Girt, New Jersey. The candidate spoke from a platform which had been erected in front of Governor A. Harry Moore's summer home. Farley described the occasion as a "lovely summer day, a bit hot ... the field in front of the platform was filled with people ... estimates varied from 100,000 to 115,000 people ... if it wasn't the biggest rally in history up to that time, it must have been very close to it."¹⁰ With bus, truck, and car, Hague had transported almost half of Hudson County to Sea Girt, and beamed at Roosevelt's grudging admiration and near amazement.

After the rally, Hague's brother James told Roosevelt that the Mayor's full first name was also Franklin, and added, "It is a coincidence that you both were called for the finest character in American history."¹¹ But, as Frank Freidel writes, "It was no coincidence that Roosevelt now was friendly with the former leader of the Smith forces, the man who one disgruntled Jersey Democrat wisecracked had 'been known to steal the starch out of a fellow's shirt.' It was politics."¹² To save his own political life, Hague had become a staunch Roosevelt supporter and had convinced that nominee that he could deliver better than

anyone else. But the humor of the situation was not lost upon Farley who remarked,

"In view of the turn-out which he engineered with the help of his Jersey City leaders, the recollection of Frank's dire threat at the Chicago convention that Governor Roosevelt couldn't carry a single Eastern state, if he was nominated, brought a smile to those of us who accompanied the¹³ presidential nominee to Sea Girt."

Eager to prove that his enormous rally was not a fluke, Hague delivered a 117,000 vote Hudson County plurality while Roosevelt won the entire state by only 30,000 votes. The 1932 election was significant because Hague became a totally devoted F. D. R. man, and the Hague-Roosevelt relationship would continue to thrive and prosper until the President's death in 1945. In 1936, Hague forever rejected Smith when the "Happy Warrior" bolted the Democratic party, saying, "It is a sorry spectacle to see a man who once was the most distinguished Democrat in the nation do their (the Republicans') bidding without having any personal conviction of the truth or falsehood of the issues which have been raised."¹⁴ From that summer day at Sea Girt, Roosevelt and Hague realized that alliance presented great advantage to each, and neither would ever seriously jeopardize the other's position.

The next several years revealed President Roosevelt's gratitude in the form of millions of federal dollars which saved Jersey City during the depression. Early in the decade of the 1930's, Republicans in New Jersey had been making noises about favorable prospects for Hague's overthrow. Hague's working

relationship with the President and the subsequent flood of federal monies quickly put an end to all such speculation. With Roosevelt safely in his corner, Hague managed to make political hay out of the depression by telling the voters again and again that only he was capable of maintaining such a friendly and profitable ear at the White House. Hague, of course, failed to include in his speeches the significant, although partial, responsibility he bore for Jersey City's financial woes.

By 1936, Hague had become an important power broker in national Democratic circles. With F. D. R.'s renomination and reelection for a second term almost a forgone conclusion, influential New Dealers began jockeying for position in the 1940 presidential contest. As early as May 9, 1936 Farley, harboring ambitions of his own, informed Harold Ickes that he thought Harry Hopkins was becoming a potential candidate since he had been "playing" with Hague and Boss Kelly of Chicago for their support.¹⁵ But it seems that Hague refused to take all of this seriously. While unaware that Roosevelt would try for a third term, Hague basically disliked and distrusted the President's New Deal circle.¹⁶ Uncomfortable with idealists and true reformers, Hague appears to have been enjoying himself with requests like Hopkins'.

In 1938, many of Roosevelt's advisors urged him to include the Hague machine in the attempted presidential purge of conservative Democrats. F. D. R. adopted an ambivalent, if politically realistic, position. He supported William H. J. Ely

for the United States Senate from New Jersey, a supposedly liberal and independent candidate. Three days before the election, Ely publically announced that he regarded Hague as his leader¹⁷ at a time when Republican candidate W. Warren Barbour was successfully employing "Hagueism" as the chief issue of the New Jersey campaign. The foolish statement cost Ely the election, and ruffled F. D. R.'s feelings. To his political advisor Farley, the President revealed his genuine regret at Ely's loss, and blamed Hague.¹⁸ But to the more liberal element of his inner circle, he included Ely's defeat in an apparent conservative decline on the national scale, and seemed to rejoice in Hague's failure to elect Ely. Writing to Josephus Daniels in Mexico City on November 14, 1938, he said,

"Curley in Massachusetts is, I hope, finally out of the picture. Quinn and O'Hara in Rhode Island tried to murder each other and both are dead! Cross was too old a story in Connecticut and Lonergan was a reactionary. Hague was slapped down in New Jersey and the Pennsylvania row brought inevitable defeat. In Ohio, Davey, the worst of our Governors, wrecked the whole ticket ... and I am sufficiently honest to decline to support any conservative Democrat."¹⁹

The President, far from being honest, was playing a smart political game and paving the way for a third term. Relizing that he needed Hague, F. D. R. never informed the Jersey City boss of his supposed displeasure. Even before the 1940 convention, Roosevelt sought the aid of some of the conservative Democrats

he had privately denounced when he ordered Farley to call Hague and Kelly to line up their Congressional delegations to vote against the Ludlow Resolution which called for a national referendum before a declaration of war.²⁰

Roosevelt's political tightrope walking between the urban bosses and the New Deal reformers was a successful calculated move. By 1940, the South and West were no longer solidly entrenched in his corner, and F. D. R. had to depend on the labor leaders and the bosses like Hague, Kelly, and Flynn of the Bronx if he were to be renominated.²¹ The bosses, on the other hand, strongly supported the "draft" Roosevelt movement, not out of any affection for Roosevelt, but because they believed he was the strongest candidate and would help their local tickets. As a bitter Jim Farley put it,

"I understood the position of Kelly, Hague, and Flynn as well as they did. Uppermost in their minds was the success of their local tickets. They all felt that if the President was at the head of the ticket, they would get more votes for their local tickets. It was as simple as that."²²

Ickes and Hopkins quickly fell in line and supported the "draft." Farley, feeling that he deserved the nomination and disillusioned with Roosevelt's seemingly uncontrollable urge for power, also reluctantly joined the "draft." With Hague and the other urban bosses in the forefront of his support, F. D. R. received a third term nomination.

Roosevelt had played his hand brilliantly, and continued to control the cards. When Garner refused to be renominated for

Vice President, F. D. R. selected Henry Wallace. Previously he had consulted with Hague, Kelly, and others about a vice presidential nominee permitting them to think that the selection would be theirs.²³ But Roosevelt really wanted Wallace, and since he was relatively unknown to the bosses, they, basking in the glow of apparent presidential confidence, presented no objections. Hague's only concern with Wallace was that he be knowledgeable in practical politics. Farley tells the story that he informed Roosevelt about Hague remarking that he did not know Wallace very well so Wallace "should have some practical political advice and the best place to get it would be from Kelly and Hague."²⁴ F. D. R., laughingly, replied, "Frank is muscling right in as usual."²⁵

The Democratic convention of 1940 marked Hague's endurance as a nationally influential politician. While others like Farley lost power because they "couldn't adapt to linking New Deal liberalism to the political machine,"²⁶ Hague "glimpsed the new vision, made the New Deal itself an issue,"²⁷ and managed to outlast many of the original New Dealers. In November, he again delivered New Jersey to Roosevelt. This time, however, the Democrats feared a possible defeat since public reaction to the third term had not been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. So Hague "delayed delivering the election night total until he saw how the rest of the state voted and how many votes were needed to turn the tide."²⁸ And Roosevelt carried New Jersey by 71,500.

In 1944, Hague and the other urban bosses again renewed their loyalty to Roosevelt, and controversy arose only with respect to

selecting his running mate. None of the bosses liked or trusted Wallace, and Roosevelt's indifference prompted a fight for the second spot on the ticket. The bosses, along with Democratic National Chairman Robert Hannegan, proceeded to find their own candidate. They rejected Sam Rayburn because they felt that a southerner might lose negro votes. Catholics like Hague turned down James Byrnes because he had left the Catholic Church when he married and posed a threat of mass disaffection in the Catholic Northeast. Finally, they selected Harry Truman because he lacked enemies, and proved compatible to all segments of the party.²⁹

Often, throughout the years of the Hague-Roosevelt relationship, F. D. R.'s more liberal supporters urged him to destroy the Hague machine. Not only did they resent the President's open appreciation of Hague's support, but they were equally incensed at Hague's ruthless tactics in Jersey City.* In 1938 Hague was engaged in preventing the C. I. O. from organizing in Jersey City. He brutally and arbitrarily arrested labor leaders, and serious questions of the constitutional guarantee of free speech and assembly were raised.** Liberal congressmen like Montana's Jerry J. O'Connell demanded that the President act in removing Hague's "fascist regime."³⁰ But F. D. R. successfully ignored the advice. As the New Republic put it, somewhat resignedly,

* See Appendix C for Oswald Garrison Villard's open letter to President Roosevelt.

** Hague's role in the civil liberties controversy of 1938 is discussed in Chapter IX.

"... from Jim Farley's pragmatic point of view, Frank Hague is a good Democrat. His machine turns out the democratic vote with unparalleled efficiency and, if his view is no longer than his nose, this may be all the national chairman can ask from one of his national vice-chairmen... The Democratic Party could do a good job of cleaning Hague out, but the mumbling inaction of its leadership to date shows it has no inclination to do so."³¹

Criticism of the President increased in the early 1940's. Hague's persecution of a young Italian opponent named John R. Longo received national headlines.* It was obvious that a blatant miscarriage of justice was being perpetuated in Jersey City under Hague's personal instigation. Longo's supporters, such as Norman Thomas, Oswald Garrison Villard, and Vito Marcantonio, asked for aid from Attorney General Francis Biddle. But Biddle, under Roosevelt's orders, sidestepped the issue. The New Republic reported,

"In his fight the democratic processes -- and to throw an American citizen into jail 'without due process of law' -- Frank Hague ... is not being opposed, to say the least, by the Attorney General ... Francis Biddle is giving an embarrassingly good imitation of a man playing along with powerful Mayor Hague."³²

Liberals wondered why Roosevelt refused to break Hague "at a time when the free peoples of the world are united against fascism,"³³ since his destruction of Hague "would make the Four Freedoms, which F. D. R. himself helped to draft, a reality for the oppressed people of one section of the U. S. A."³⁴

* The Longo case is discussed in detail in Chap. IX.

By the election of 1944, some liberals believed that Roosevelt would pay for Hague's support by losing. James Kerney, Jr. of the Trenton Times predicted a Dewey victory since Hague, in his mind, was "a millstone around the neck of President Roosevelt."³⁵ Norman Thomas, in a July radio address directed to candidate Roosevelt, asked, "Do you believe that a party like your own, which rests organizationally on the Southern Bourbons like Bilbo, and the Northern bosses like Hague, both of whom, especially the latter, you have continuously appeased, can ever be the vehicle for plenty, peace, and freedom?"³⁶ But their pleas were for naught. Roosevelt stuck with Hague, and the boss delivered New Jersey by a razor thin margin of 17,000 votes.

Quite simply, Roosevelt protected Hague, even though Hague's policies represented a direct contradiction to the New Deal, because he needed the votes Hague could deliver.³⁷ If F. D. R. had opposed Hague and the other urban bosses, he might never have been renominated for a third term, and certainly his victories in 1940 and 1944 would have been gained with considerable difficulty. As Richard Hofstadter has written,

"To the discomfort of the old-fashioned, principled liberals who were otherwise enthusiastic about his reforms, F. D. R. made no effort to put an end to bossism and corruption, but simply ignored the entire problem. In the interest of larger national goals and more urgent needs, he worked with the bosses wherever they would work with him -- and did not scruple to include one of the worst machines of all, the authoritarian Hague machine in New Jersey."³⁸

Hague, gratefully employing F.E.R.A., C.W.A., P.W.A., and W.P.A. funds to keep Jersey City alive, would have agreed. As it was, both profitted from the unholy alliance, and it is doubtful, particularly in Hague's case, whether either could have succeeded in his goals without the other's help.

By 1948, the situation appeared less than healthy for Hague. He was in trouble at home, and Thomas Dewey was making "Hagueism" a national issue. Concerned more than ever with electing his local ticket, Hague joined the other Democratic bosses (Arvey of Chicago, Crump of Memphis, Curley of Boston, Byrd of Virginia, and Earl Long of Louisiana) in an attempt to dump President Truman from the national ticket. But they "could not unite upon a substitute who was at once 'available' and strong enough to take the nomination away from the President."³⁹ Hague, after remaining silent to see if an alternative candidate could be found, finally endorsed Truman. Then, worried that Truman would run poorly in New Jersey, joined the "draft" Eisenhower boomlet. When the General declared his noncandidacy, Hague returned to the Truman camp.⁴⁰ As Hague had feared, Truman lost New Jersey by 85,000 votes, and the Boss of Jersey City, with his national influence greatly diminished, girded for the fatal municipal elections of 1949.

With expert political skill, Frank Hague had operated in the ruling councils of the national Democratic party for more than twenty five years. During that time he had backed a losing candidate only once, and his power increased as he managed to outlast most of the other political professionals. Perhaps Hague's most glorious moment on the national level came at the

convention of 1940 when he and several others coldly wrecked the ambitions of other contenders, and "drafted" Roosevelt to the President's immense pleasure and gratitude. For sixteen years Hague worked with Roosevelt, and enjoyed the great campaigner's support and admiration, if not friendship. On many occasions, the President summoned Hague to the White House or to Hyde Park for advice, and the Mayor of Jersey City rubbed shoulders with mortified New Dealers. First and foremost, the great man from Hyde Park and the boss from the Horseshoe were politicians. And each used the other's abilities to fulfill his own ambitions. Between 1932 and 1945, Frank Hague had indeed come a long way from his birthplace in a slum dwelling on Tenth Street.

CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VIII: "A LACE-CURTAIN IRISH SNAPPING TURTLE"

CHAPTER VIII

Often a biographer feels compelled to devote an entire chapter to his subject's character and personality. This desire is strong in Frank Hague's case because he was a more complex and fascinating figure than most American politicians. Moreover, for a deeper appreciation of Hague's public policies, a detailed account of his private life is more than justified. Joseph and Stewart Alsop once referred described Hague as a "lace-curtain, Irish snapping turtle."¹ In this phrase they accurately combined the two facets of the man. Frank Hague was an aggressive, ruthless politician who saw life from the point of view of the gutter, but had acquired wealth and influence and unsuccessfully attempted to act the respectable, "lace-curtain" role.

Physically he was a tall and extremely muscular man. Ever since his sickly boyhood, Hague remained a physical fitness addict. Every day, in the morning and before retiring, Hague would embark upon long walks, sometimes marking five to ten miles and easily outstepping his exhausted police escort.² Sometimes during these walks, he was "apt to drop into a handy drugstore and put in a call for police."³ Priding himself on an efficient police department, there would be "hell to pay" if a patrolman did not arrive "there in three minutes flat."⁴ Hague never drank or smoked, and tolerated neither practice in his presence. He annually took city hall workers to Dinty Moore's in New York, but liquor could not be served until Hague had left the table.⁵ On one occasion, Daniel Finn, a Tammany leader,

encountered Hague lunching at New York's Plaza Hotel. Hague invited Finn to join him and inquired if he desired to order. Finn asked for a scotch and soda but Hague angrily replied, "Not at my table you won't."⁶

Hague ate sparsely, and never at political banquets.⁷ His only nourishment during the day consisted of a light breakfast, and a heavier lunch, usually a grapefruit, kidney pie or lamb chops, and coffee topped off by a serving of rhubarb for dessert.⁸ Hague was extraordinarily careful about his health. Critics, again lapsing into an unfair denunciation of everything connected with Hague, accused him of hypochondria. Dr. Thomas White, the Mayor's personal physician, testifies to the contrary. One of Hague's brothers contracted pulmonary tuberculosis in his youth, and had slowly and painfully died in a Colorado sanatorium. This left a deep impression upon Frank, and for the rest of his life he took care to avoid any respiratory disease. But, as Dr. White maintained, "he was not, in any manner of speaking, a hypochondriac."⁹ Rather, he "took meticulous care of himself and possessed a good understanding of his health."¹⁰

Hague always dressed elegantly. In part, this represented a desire to overcome his childhood poverty, but more importantly, Hague, like Huey Long, believed that a leader must appear on a higher level than his constituency for then they would look upon him as the embodiment of their hopes and dreams. To this

end he was consistently well-groomed, donning "dark suits, subdued ties, and arch-conservative stiff collars."¹¹ Some people inaccurately claimed that Hague imitated New York's dapper Mayor Jimmy Walker, after his remark, "Jimmy Walker, in my estimation, is the cream of the earth."¹²

In public, Hague lacked the sense of humor that was usually associated with Hibernic politicians. He was usually stiff at social gatherings, inevitably leaving early with a sour expression on his face. But privately, friends testify, Hague would joke and roll with laughter, kiddingly declaring, "It's damn lucky for Tammany Hall that I wasn't born in New York."¹³ Indeed, associates described him in private as "quite a raconteur."¹⁴

Perhaps Hague's most deplorable personal characteristic was his penchant for physical violence. He intimidated opponents by ramming his forefinger into their faces, and the threat of potential violence was never very far away in any of Hague's conversations. Stories of Hague personally resorting to fisticuffs are endless. Hague himself recalled an incident in which he had witnessed an accident and telephoned for an ambulance. He goes on,

"It was forty-five minutes before the ambulance got there. I asked the doctor why it had taken him so long. He mumbled something like 'Don't you think I had to put on my clothes?' I knew he was mad at being called out at that time of night. I hauled off and punched him in the face."¹⁵

On another occasion, after Hague's police had beaten up James Burkitt, an opponent, Hague asked, "What's the matter with your face?"

"Some of your thugs beat me up," Burkitt answered.

Hague laughed.

"Don't laugh, Mr. Mayor."

"I'm not laughing at you, but your face looks so funny."¹⁶

Hague's oratory and speaking habits revealed one of Jersey City's worst dialects. Inevitably, he began each speech and almost each paragraph with the phrase, "I, as your Mayor." He frequently lapsed into profanity, "I says: You go to hell. You'll not put that over on me."¹⁷ With vigorous thumping gestures, he was likely to produce incoherent statements such as,

"A few irresponsible people are trying to take advantage of the unfortunate closing of the New Jersey Title Guarantee and Trust Company in this city, for personal political reasons, by blaming the city administration and the tax situation, which is no different in Jersey City than in any other large city in the state of New Jersey, and which did not, as a matter of fact, have any bearing whatsoever on the closing of this institution."¹⁸

In his even more brilliant flashes of Jersey Cityese he would emphatically thunder, "One hundred ten thousand voters has endorsed my administration,"¹⁹ or state that a certain city commission "has went on record."²⁰ And he would often end his statements with phrases like, "You understand me?" or "You know I'm right."²¹

His poor oratory and general lack of knowledge forced the Mayor to surround himself with more erudite advisors who could either translate what an opponent was saying or rephrase Hague's style into more easily understood English. New Jersey Democrats outside of Hudson County were reluctant to have Hague stump for them in campaigns. Some sources link William Dill's gubernatorial defeat in 1934 with Hague's ungrammatical and offensive campaigning on his behalf.²² During one of his "Americanization" rallies in the Jersey City armory in 1938, Hague denounced all labor organizers as "reds" and urged that they be "locked up" in Alaska. The error stemmed from His Honor's mispronunciation of Alcatraz.

Records show that Hague read only one book since his expulsion from P. S. 21, a volume called The Red Network by a certain Mrs. Dilling.²² But success in Jersey City politics did not demand formal education or broad general knowledge. Hague could remember thousands of names and faces, and could draw a map of Jersey City election precincts from memory. He was familiar with every neighborhood, would instantly recite the names of all the families of his committeemen and their backgrounds.

For recreation, Hague loved prizefighting, baseball, and horseracing. Rather than a concert or a Broadway show, Hague attended boxing matches with unbounded enthusiasm. So enthusiastic was he, that the Mackay Committee in 1921 reported "that official cars were used on an alleged road-inspecting tour which terminated

in Toledo, Ohio, the day of the Dempsey-Willard fight."²³ And as Jersey City's head bookmaker, his interest in horseracing was somewhat more than leisurely recreation.

But aside from politics and the beloved Medical Center, baseball represented the most treasured pursuit of the Mayor. During Hague's tenure, the Jersey City Jerseys of the International League often outdrew the New York and Brooklyn major league teams in attendance. He instructed the leaders of the machine, in much the same way as during an election, to produce a good turnout at Roosevelt Stadium. Crowds of 50,000 or more jammed the small ballpark, and thousands of others listened to loudspeakers in the parking lots. Hague always occupied a box seat, and threw out the first ball.²⁴

Whenever the Jerseys experienced a batting slump, a worried Hague appeared at the stadium to help. The Mayor would get into the batting cage, and, employing a golf swing, would begin hitting long fly balls into the outfield. Having worked up a good sweat, and astonished the lagging team, Hague would seat himself in his box and the Jerseys, fortified by his threatening presence, would win an occasional game.²⁵ Hague's knowledge of professional baseball players was almost as extensive as his intimacy with Jersey City voting patterns. Once, in San Diego, having just returned from the afternoon horse races, Hague attended a minor league game. As he was sitting down, he recognized the first base coach simply from his stance. Hague waved and at the end of the inning, the coach came over and shouted, "Hi Mayor!"²⁶

Although not a physical coward, Hague surrounded himself with bodyguards and protective devices as if he lived in fear of assassination. Three well-guarded outer rooms surrounded his city hall office, and he travelled in a bullet-proof Cadillac. Whenever Hague left the office, two cars full of plainclothesmen escorted his automobile to prevent anyone from following. Whenever he walked the streets of Jersey City, several policemen went with him, and bodily moved anyone who got in the Mayor's way.²⁷

While generously providing a splendid Medical Center for the people of Jersey City, Hague did not neglect his own interests. Many critics wondered how, during his tenure as mayor, he managed to accumulate a personal fortune in the millions while earning a municipal salary of between \$5,000 and \$8,000. He owned an apartment house in the wealthier section of Jersey City, and kept fourteen of its rooms for his private use. In addition, he possessed a duplex apartment on Park Avenue in New York City and, on occasion, kept apartments in either the Plaza or Waldorf-Astoria Hotels. For recreation, he bought a \$250,000 summer house in Deal on the Jersey shore. Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, Hague spent most of his time golfing and attending the races in either Florida or California, and governed Jersey City by telephone. Frequently, accompanied by the retiring Mrs. Hague, he embarked upon long and costly cruises to Europe. Whenever attending a sporting event, he and his cronies always possessed the most expensive seats. In any of these activities, he displayed the unfortunate and damaging habit of flashing thousand dollar bills and heavily tipping scores of waiters and attendants.

Hague derived his money from the machine's rackets and the three per cent "rake-off." At his death, his estate was listed in excess of \$2,000,000, but knowledgeable sources claim that the Hague fortune could be valued at more than \$80,000,000.²⁸ Hague's defenders scoff at the latter figure, and insist that he earned his money from smart stock market transactions on the advice of such Wall Street magnates as Jacob Raskob.²⁹ Although an exact tabulation of Hague's fortune will probably never be revealed, it is most likely that thirty years of personally controlling the enormous Jersey City rackets and the extensive municipal graft easily yielded a sum far greater than the recorded \$2,000,000.

Incredibly enough, on the question of personal finance, Hague successfully evaded the law because of extremely tight control measures. All of his personal purchases, like the summer home in Deal, were accomplished through the payment of lump sums of cash by his lawyer, John Milton.³⁰ He only paid the income tax on his small salary and an even smaller furniture tax. In 1930, the Internal Revenue Service, aroused by Hague's ostensible display of wealth, announced he would be forced to pay \$1,800,000 in delinquent taxes and penalties.³¹ Hague declared that his personal finances were no one's business but his own,³² and when Internal Revenue agents proved unable to find evidence for indictment, he graciously consented to pay \$60,000 to the federal government as a gesture of good sportsmanship. Hague considered the matter closed, but rumors circulated that

Gen. W. W. Atterbury, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, had persuaded Secretary of the Treasury Mellon to "fix" the matter for Hague.³³

As the illegal monies poured into Hague's coffers, he began to think of himself as an established member of the upper class. He frequently entertained hundreds of guests at lavish parties in some of America's most expensive and respectable hotels and restaurants. In the process he gained the mistaken notion that his stolen money was enough of a vehicle to place him on the social register and provide the Hague name an aura of respectability. Thomas J. Fleming humorously relates the story of Deputy Mayor John Malone asking to be invited to one of Hague's parties "promising to stand obscurely in the corner and not open his mouth." Hague haughtily answered Malone's request, "I'm sorry, Johnny, you just ain't got enough class."³⁴

More so than most successful politicians, Hague avoided any hint of personal scandal. His marriage to Jennie Warner appears to have been a simple and quiet triumph. Mrs. Hague displayed no interest in politics and made only two political appearances during her husband's career.³⁵ Jennie Hague bore two children; a daughter who died in childbirth and a son, Frank Hague, Jr. The Hagues later adopted a daughter, Peggy, and rumors of her illegitimacy circulated widely. Although no substantial evidence ever surfaced, some persons close to Hague alleged that Peggy was a product of one of Junior's college romances because she bore no family resemblance and had been adopted the

day after her birth. On the other hand, the Hagues had always wanted a girl of their own, and the identity of Peggy's father has never been revealed.³⁶ The Mayor, whose Irish Catholic puritanism seemed to categorize women as evil, was never touched by the rumors.

Hague's most significant quality, as an eminently successful politician, was his innate ability to discover personal attributes necessary to lead and dominate other men. Aside from his intimate knowledge of Jersey City ward politics, Hague possessed deep, if crude, psychological powers over his subordinates. Hague, as other dictators, realized the "political utility of fear."³⁷ He never bluffed. Behind every threat that emanated from the Mayor's office, stood the frighteningly real possibility of physical violence. In political matters, Hague kept his word. If he promised a family a turkey at Christmas, his wardheelers delivered. And if he threatened an opponent with physical force, his police stood ready. Frank Hague was neither polished nor sophisticated, but he was as aware of political realities and political solutions as a Franklin D. Roosevelt or a Sam Rayburn. During Hague's fight with the C. I. O. in 1938, The Nation accurately described his abilities,

"Frank Hague is nobody's fool and he is far more than an actor. For all his display of political primitivism he has shown the qualities that have made him one of the top-flight political bosses in America-- the shrewdness, the quickness, the overbearing force, the elaborate directness and sincerity, the uncanny ability to pick his own battleground,

the capacity to size up the political potentialities of a situation and exploit them to the full. Such a man is no laughing matter. He is dangerous." 38

To the public Hague presented a picture of corruption and dictatorship. In reality, though he often acted in the worst despotic manner, Hague was also a sincere humanitarian. Quite simply, however, his personality did not harmonize with twentieth century American ideals. Main Street, U. S. A., would not accept, a public official who ruled his domain as if he were a German prince of the Middle Ages. Throughout his career, Hague's more unfortunate traits heavily outweighed the charitable side of his character, and Hague, the man, presents a similarly unappealing portrait as Hague, the politician.

CHAPTER VIII

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CHAPTER IX: "I AM THE LAW"

CHAPTER IX

In late 1937, at a meeting in a Jersey City Methodist church, Frank Hague related his programs for handling juvenile delinquents. He referred to an incident in which two boys, aged 13 and 14, had been brought before a magistrate for various petty offenses. The magistrate had sentenced them to a reformatory, but the Mayor had objected and secured their release. Hague explained to the assemblage,

"They weren't bad boys. But they weren't made for school, either. They wanted work, and until they got it they would always be in trouble. The law says you have to go to school until you're 16. But in this case, I am the law. As long as a boy loves his mother and is anxious to help her, as these boys said they are, they can be won over by righthartedness. I got them both jobs."

Hague had correctly achieved a humanistic goal, but his characteristically dominating and ill-advised rhetoric presented his opponents with a catchword. The press turned the phrase, "I am the law," at once Hague's most famous and most unfortunate utterance, into a symbol of notoriety. National attention focused on Hague's rule in Jersey City, and deeper investigation revealed that His Honor was not entirely undeserving of the ensuing public clamor for his removal.

Throughout his tenure, Hague had consistently adhered to his 1917 pledge of strictly preserving the morals of Jersey City. In an era when gangsters were fighting for control of cities such as Chicago, Hague closed the borders of Jersey City to the

mob. Although his aversion to the hoodlums stemmed chiefly from his refusal to tolerate any competition which might endanger his own rackets, Jersey City could boast of an impressive law and order record.

From 1918 to 1936, Jersey City experienced no payroll or bank hold-up.² Not "a single stock-swindling house, bucket shop or mail-fraud establishment"³ existed. Disguised detectives lounged in train and bus stations, and forced any undesirables to take the next most available mode of transport to New York. Often a person, unable to provide a satisfactory explanation of his presence in Jersey City, was simply arrested, denied bail, and sentenced to thirty days.⁴ The police maintained an unofficial curfew from midnight to dawn, and with Hague's sanction blocked most of the nocturnal traffic which would normally cross Jersey City.⁵ Hague's tactics in this regard, although quite unconstitutional, proved almost totally successful causing the underworld to adopt a common saying to the effect that a criminal "could only go through Jersey City on an airplane."⁶ Hague cared little for legalities when he boasted, "Your daughter, your wife or your sister can walk the streets without being molested."⁷

Hague also refused to allow nightclubs, dance halls, cabarets, or burlesque houses. He pushed through a city ordinance which prohibited women from entering bars and saloons with or without an escort.* Prostitution became so restricted that a police

* In 1970, the ordinance is before the New Jersey Supreme Court on grounds of unconstitutionality.

chief swore thirty years later that he knew of no brothel or even a single instance of illegal activity.⁸ With "No Vice, No Crime, No Racketeering" as a slogan, Hague managed to clean up Jersey City to the extent that the Federal Bureau of Investigation declared it had "less crime than any other city of more than 100,000 population in the country."⁹

To achieve Jersey City's freedom from crime, Hague employed an outlandish number of police, spies, and informants. For a population of 317,000, Jersey City maintained a police force of 968 men. In comparison, Rochester (328,000 population) had 477 policemen, Seattle (366,000 population) kept 574 policemen, and Kansas City (400,000 population) hired 649 policemen. Not only was Jersey City's police force the largest in the United States for a city of its size, but it paid police salaries which were more than \$1,000 higher than those of comparable cities.¹⁰ And the Jersey City police acted as the personal employees of Mayor Hague. They performed as Hague's shock troops, ready for immediate action, in a sense greater than even the President's executive authority to deploy United States Marines in emergencies. Hague absolutely controlled the men in blue. As Professor McKean explains,

"The political discipline of the police force is perfect, complete ... The Jersey City and Hudson County police forces are so filled with relatives of politicians that a prominent official who cannot otherwise be disciplined may be reached by having his relatives demoted or dismissed."¹¹

And the men Hague selected for police duty usually held views similar to Captain "Paddy" Flanigan's of the second precinct whose "idea of helping Hague was to crack skulls."¹²

Hague further determined that no mode of communication in Jersey City be free of his surveillance. The police regularly and arbitrarily installed telephone taps, and Hague informants in the Post Office periodically opened the mail of suspected opponents. In addition, an important Hudson County official admitted, "Every night a police lieutenant sat in the Western Union telegraph office in Journal Square and read every telegram that came in and went out of Jersey City that day."¹³

But Hague would never have received national notoriety had he not attempted to prevent labor organizing in Jersey City. To be sure, the history of New Jersey reveals that labor movements had always experienced serious difficulties in the Garden State. When Norman Thomas spoke on the behalf of strikers in Hackensack in 1928, he was summarily arrested. Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union experienced an identical fate that same year when he began to read the Declaration of Independence in front of Paterson City Hall.¹⁴ The problem stemmed chiefly from powerful opposition by the state's business leaders, and a similar attitude by both political parties. Business leaders controlled the Republican party, and Hague, a determined enemy of unionization, ruled the Democrats. Labor was effectively barred from significant political power, "although, of course, both parties annually put perfunctory labor planks in their platforms."¹⁵

In Jersey City, the Hague machine sought to attract outside companies by promising that no labor organization would be permitted. Many New York firms, troubled by the wage scales demanded by strong unions, responded to Hague's invitation. A common example of the relocation of companies from neighboring areas was the Miller Parks Furniture Company. The firm resulted from a merger of two Brooklyn furniture companies which had unexpired labor contracts with the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union. On Hague's favorable terms, the new company transferred its operations to Jersey City, and when its former employees appeared for work, they were told to "forget about the union."¹⁶

Throughout the thirties, Hague successfully employed this tactic in an effort to revive Jersey City's depression-ridden economy. When labor objected and tried to organize, Hague,

"made use of every possible administrative device to prevent meetings from being held by any speakers except those he approved. The owners of public halls were deterred from renting them. Permits for the distribution of handbills were refused. This policy had the strong backing of Jersey City business men and voters generally, even those who were ¹⁷ opposed to the Mayor otherwise."

Hague's police arrested hundreds of union men on the pretext that they did not possess permits to picket. If a labor organizer requested a picket permit, the Director of Public Safety instantly refused. Inside factories, Hague informants and plainclothesmen kept strict watch over the workers to insure that they refrained from discussing unionism.

To justify his abridgement of civil liberties, Hague pointed to a city ordinance which forbade the distribution of printed matter, and the holding of public meetings in public places without permits. Norman Thomas first tested the constitutionality of the statute in 1937. Thomas had come to Jersey City to speak in behalf of the C.I.O. organizers. A phalanx of police met him, and bodily escorted him to the Holland Tunnel back to New York City. Thomas brought suit but the New Jersey courts upheld Hague's ordinance.

In November, 1937 the real struggle began. William J. Carney, C.I.O. regional director for New Jersey, prepared to start a membership drive in Jersey City. In announcing his program, he said, "We will go to Jersey City to organize in a peaceful manner. Whether this will be possible in the face of denials of civil rights in that city I am unable to say at this time."¹⁸ Hague rejoined by calling the C.I.O. people "reds," and began an "Americanism" campaign in Jersey City which maintained that the real battle was between patriots and communists. He staged several immense rallies in the Jersey City Armory, and gained overwhelming public support by thundering,

"It would be wiser for these strangers striving to save us from ourselves to first find out what this fight is all about. These strangers may as well understand that the Stars and Stripes will continue to fly over our city. The blue and white will remain with the red in our emblem. The red flag will never be hoisted here while we Americans live in Jersey City."¹⁹

Billboards and street signs proclaimed "Americanism" slogans, and equated Norman Thomas and the C.I.O. leaders with Stalin.

Hague received support from the entire spectrum of Jersey City society. The Chamber of Commerce, satisfied that the C.I.O. could not gain a foothold in the city, urged the public to "let the chips fall where they may."²⁰ Catholic pastors warned their parishioners of the evils of labor socialism. The American Federation of Labor, in the midst of bitter infighting with the C.I.O., presented Hague with an honorary membership card.²¹

Heywood Broun, in the New Republic, satirically described one of the Hague rallies. The meeting had been called to "save Jersey City from the reds." The first person on the platform, "introduced as a prominent tenor from the Metropolitan Opera House," sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." A four-year-old girl followed, singing "The Merry-Go Round Broke Down." Then, a Jersey City judge arose and declared,

"Poisonally I was born in Joisey
City ... And I am not here tonight
to attack the so-called Civil Liberty
Union. Poisonally I haven't much
faith in it. I am reminded of the
Scripture which say ..."

At this point, "nine fat clergymen," on the platform, "beamed and banged their hands together." A hush fell over the crowd as Mayor Hague ascended the platform, and the band broke into "Stars and Stripes Forever." In his prepared remarks, Hague accused John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers of being

completely controlled by the Communist Party, and called Roger Baldwin and Morris Ernst of the A.C.L.U. the "twin dictators of the radical movement." To deafening applause, Hague retired and the rally ended.²²

Right-wing fanatic Gerald L. K. Smith came to New Jersey to campaign for company unions, and declared himself in accord with Hague on the C.I.O. issue.²³ Reactionaries, less famous than Smith, from all parts of the country went on record in support of Hague. A major exception was Father Coughlin who denounced the Mayor as a "cheap, petty politician" for allegedly attempting to disrupt his National Union's progress in New Jersey.

The long-awaited showdown came at 6:00 AM on November 29, 1937. C.I.O. organizers tried to gather at their headquarters at 79 Montgomery St. in Jersey City. The police anticipated them. They searched the crowd, and confiscated circulars and handbills dealing with C.I.O. activities.²⁴ On orders from Hague, the police chief directed a systematic and brutal arrest or deportation of the laborites. The police then thoroughly searched the headquarters and placed those who were not arrested on ferryboats to New York City.²⁵

The C.I.O. brought suit in New Jersey's District Court D contending that the offending Jersey City ordinance, which read,

"The Director of Public Safety is hereby authorized to refuse to issue said permit when, after investigation of all the facts and circumstances pertinent to said application, he believes

it to be proper to refuse the issuance thereof; provided, however, that said permit shall only be refused for the purpose of preventing riots, disturbances or disorderly assemblage."²⁶

was unconstitutional on the grounds that the threat of disorder was not a valid reason for refusing a permit, and that the Director of Public Safety could solely employ his discretion in determining which speakers or demonstrators were potentially dangerous.²⁷

Throughout the trial, Hague hurt the defense cause by making blundering admissions to the plaintiff. When Spaulding Frazer, counsel for the C.I.O. asked the Mayor to relate his notions of the right of free assembly, Hague replied,

"If they were high-class citizens and they met in peaceful, orderly manner, why, certainly, they have perfect rights; but if prior to that they were advocating the overthrow of the government, they were dissatisfied with everything that America offered to them, why, of course, I don't assume they have any rights."²⁸

On another occasion, Hague was questioned about an anti-Catholic circular. The exchange, with Frazer questioning, went as follows,

"A. Well, I would say there is an objection to that; that is not a proper circular to distribute amongst a community that is law-abiding; that is a religious circular.

Q. You think a religious circular should not be distributed?

A. No, I do not. I think they ought to keep out.

Q. And if they are --

A. They shouldn't come in there with any purpose of aggravating the peace and quietness of the city. What right did that circular have in Jersey City?

Q. I am not on the stand, sir."²⁹

The District Court, on October 27, 1938, agreed with the C.I.O.'s contentions, and granted an injunction which decreed that Jersey City's public officials should not prevent the free distribution of circulars and the holding of public meetings.³⁰ Hague was incensed. Not only had his absolute rule been challenged, but he had gained wide and damaging publicity when appearing as a fool on the witness stand. He resolved to carry on the fight.

Accordingly, Hague brought suit to revoke the injunction in the United States Court of Appeals, Third Circuit. The court declared the questionable city ordinance void, and affirmed the District Court's decree.³¹ Hague was not satisfied, and his lawyers brought the case of Hague vs. the Committee for Industrial Organization before the United States Supreme Court. For a final time, the high court rejected Hague. The vote was 5 to 2. Justices Frankfurter and Douglas abstained. Justices McReynolds and Butler dissented. And Justices Roberts, Black, Stone, Reed, and Chief Justice Hughes concurred.³² Justice Roberts composed the majority opinion, and concluded,

"Although it has been held that the Fourteenth Amendment created no rights in citizens of the United States, but merely secured existing rights against state abridgement, it is clear that the right peaceably to

assemble and to discuss these topics, and to communicate respecting them, whether orally or in writing, is a privilege inherent in citizenship of the United States which the Amendment protects."³³

Hague took the ultimate defeat in good grace. After the first two judicial reverses, he had not really expected to fare better at the bar of the Supreme Court. He immediately secured the passage of a new ordinance, free of the unconstitutional clauses, and publicly declared that as a good American he would abide by the ruling.³⁴ Hague maintained his composure when, shortly afterward, the American Civil Liberties Union staged a large victory rally in Journal Square with Norman Thomas as the chief speaker.

Hague vs. the C.I.O. became a landmark case in matters of abridgement of civil liberties. Legally, the Supreme Court decision maintained that "speakers are free to talk without previous permission from anybody, but remain fully responsible for what they say."³⁵ With respect to enforcement, Attorney General Frank Murphy instituted a Civil Liberties Unit in the Justice Department, and along with the important white primary case, United States vs. Classic, employed the Hague reversal as a keystone of the agency's powers.³⁶

As a result of his fight with the C.I.O., Hague was widely compared to the European fascists. Harold Laski, from his vantage point in London, thought that the successful careers of Huey Long,

Herman Talmadge, Father Coughlin, Thomas Girdler, Henry Ford, and Hague constituted the beginnings of a significant American fascist movement.³⁷ The Nation bitterly commented,

"If now his creed sounds like a made-in-America version of fascism, it should be remembered that he was running his town in the Tweed-Crocker tradition when Mussolini was a jittery editor of Avanti and Hitler was painting houses in Austria. Mass hooliganism, political reprisals, and the rest were rampant in our own Jersey City before the word 'totalitarianism' ever came from overseas."³⁸

Hague was accused of employing American slogans, and glorifying American traditions to create a personal brand of fascism and repression. The liberal press made constant allusions to the "Berlin-Rome-Jersey City" axis, and described Hudson County as an "occupied area set apart from the rest of the country as a fascist unit."³⁹ A New York Post editorial remarked that the Hague machine's repressive tactics resembled Hitler's.⁴⁰ The liberals further accused President Roosevelt of refusing to act in the Hague case. New Dealers wondered how the administration could "fight a dictator in Berlin and protect and honor one in Jersey City."⁴¹

Hague's difficulties in the area of civil rights did not end at the conclusion of the C.I.O. case. His persecution of a young opponent, John R. Longo, made as many national headlines and caused more waves of revulsion. Longo, an idealist whom Hague could not buy off, served in the Jersey City Bureau of

Elections, and attempted to bring public attention to voting irregularities. When Longo remained undaunted by threats, the Boss determined to remove him. Early in 1938, Jersey City voting rolls were discovered to have been tampered with. The party affiliation by a single name had been blotted out and replaced with the initials of the other party. Longo was accused and brought to trial.

No Jersey City lawyer was willing to defend Longo, and he was not destitute enough to merit a public defender. The matter was brought to the attention of New York's Mayor LaGuardia who persuaded Vito Marcantonio to assume the case without charging a fee. However, it proved impossible to select an impartial jury, and Marcantonio was forced to settle on one in which ten of the twelve jurors were either themselves on the county payroll, or had relatives on the payroll. Against such odds, the trial became a sham, although Marcantonio produced a brilliant defense. The verdict was predictable, but Hague was so enraged at the hiring of Marcantonio that he persuaded the judge to give Longo an unreasonably stiff eight month imprisonment sentence. This was not the first time the Hague machine had thrown a completely innocent man into jail.⁴²

But the Longo case proved different from the rest because the young Italian determined not to buckle under the persecution. Longo served the sentence in the Hudson County Penitentiary, at hard labor eight hours a day crushing rocks with a twenty pound sledge hammer. He was refused access to newspapers, radios, and

all forms of recreation. The prison was located on "Snake Hill" by the mosquito-ridden Hackensack River in the Jersey meadows. The warden was "Mike" Gill, Hague's leader in Jersey City's Tenth Ward. Gill operated the prison as ruthlessly and arbitrarily as Hague operated his machine. Whenever Gill needed anyone to perform a particular job within the prison, assuming no one available was already behind bars, he would inform the police who would arrest a person, skilled in whatever service Gill desired, and a cooperating magistrate would sentence the hapless individual to ninety days at "Snake Hill." In this way, Gill obtained cooks, repairmen, and personal servants. A particularly glaring example of this tactic occurred when Gill wanted to fix his boat which he anchored by the jail on the river. The police brought in a marine mechanic and Gill used him until he repaired the boat. Under such conditions, Hague's opponents either changed their minds or wasted away.⁴³

While Longo served his sentence, Marcantonio and the editors of liberal New York periodicals, such as The Nation and New Republic, formed the "Longo Defense Committee" and campaigned for his release. Longo served out his sentence, and left prison. But when he persisted in opposing Hague, he was again convicted on a trumped-up charge. Public clamor against Hague increased. Norman Thomas and three Congressmen (John Maynard of Minnesota, Jerry O'Connell of Montana, and Jerry Voorhis of California) joined the movement to release Longo, and remove Hague. The

press implicated the Roosevelt administration by making statements such as,

"The Longo case ... offers evidence of the strange and strong tie-up between the Hague machine and the Administration ... the Attorney General answered in a public statement ... that there was never any doubt of Longo's guilt. It seemed apparent that a Presidential election year was no time to start cleaning up Hague."⁴⁴

Finally, Longo was granted a new trial and gained acquittal. Longo's victory resulted from the long treatment of ^{his case} /, during which time anti-Hague governors began removing Hague men from the state judiciary and insured Longo a fair trial. Hague had lost again. But to defeat him, it had taken several years, and the wrath of almost an entire nation.

As in most aspects of his career, Hague presented a double image in his programs for maintaining law in Jersey City. On the one hand, he successfully made Jersey City, as only he could phrase it, "the most moralest city in America."⁴⁵ Although he employed arbitrary and unconstitutional methods, the public applauded when he virtually removed vice and gangsters from Jersey City. But Hague used the same brutal methods in removing political opponents, and "Hagueism" horrified most of the nation. In short, a citizen could walk the streets of Jersey City in complete safety, as long as his politics were Hague's.

CHAPTER IX

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CHAPTER X: "GOD HAVE MERCY ON HIS SINFUL, GREEDY SOUL"

CHAPTER X

In 1937, a 45,000 vote Hague majority squeaked perennial candidate A. Harry Moore into his third term as governor. Moore, fresh from serving an uncompleted term in the United States Senate where he had voted against the Social Security Act claiming it would "take the romance out of old age,"¹ was exhausted by the political wars and determined to retire in 1940. Hague was searching for a suitable successor when fate intervened, presented a candidate for 1940, and signalled the beginnings of Hague's decline.

The catalyst was Frank Hague, Jr. An amiable, easygoing person who possessed no interest in politics and lacked his father's "aggressiveness and astuteness,"² Junior was forced to pursue a legal career. After a series of abortive prep school experiences, Junior attended Princeton from which he resigned to enter, without a bachelor's degree, the University of Virginia Law School. After two years of failing a great majority of his courses, he transferred to the Washington and Lee University Law School. But the study of the law proved too difficult to compete with Washington and Lee's social life, and after four fun-filled years, Junior left, again without a degree.

Back in New Jersey, on the strength of his father's connections, Junior incredibly passed the state bar examinations on the first attempt. He gained a clerkship with his father's attorney, John Milton, and then became a secretary to New Jersey

Supreme Court Justice Newton H. Porter. Although he never tried a case, the elder Hague determined that his son was ready for higher office.³

In 1938, Hague persuaded President Roosevelt to elevate Judge William C. Clark from the United States District Court to the United States Court of Appeals. F. D. R. then moved Judge T. G. Walker from the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals to Clark's former District Court Seat.⁴ And a year later, at Hague's suggestion, Governor Moore appointed Junior to the Court of Errors and Appeals. When a storm of criticism, denouncing the elevation of an inexperienced and incompetent young playboy to the state's highest court, broke over Moore, the Governor justified his action by stating, "I know this appointment will make his dad happy."⁵

Frank Hague thus happily assured his son's future, but developments determined that he would pay dearly. In 1940, President Roosevelt asked Hague for a favor in return for his elevation of Judge Clark which had ultimately and inadvertently on F. D. R.'s part opened a spot on the state bench for Junior. Roosevelt was hesitant to promote Assistant Secretary of the Navy Charles Edison, a native of New Jersey, to head the Navy Department. He explained his reasons to Jim Farley,

"I have a high regard for him and he's done a good job as Assistant Secretary. But between you and me, Jim, it is rather difficult to carry on with him because he's so hard of hearing. He's a perfectly wonderful fellow and I wouldn't hurt him for the world."⁶

When Farley objected ~~alto~~ retiring Edison, F. D. R. replied that he would persuade Hague to elect him as either governor or senator. But Farley, exhibiting a gift of prophecy, defended his position,

"He won't hear any better in Trenton than he does in the Navy Department and New Jersey is an important state. I want to remind you that Hague is a hard taskmaster and he might want Charley to keep certain obligations that Charley wouldn't want to fulfill. I don't think it would be fair to Charley to get him involved. He's an honorable fellow."⁷

Years later, Hague would have wished that the President had listened to Farley's advice. But for the present, Hague was delighted that he could return F. D. R.'s favor, and after Roosevelt coaxed Edison out of the Navy Department, Hague announced his support for the former cabinet official for Governor of New Jersey.

From the beginning, His Honor realized the enormity of his error. Edison accepted Hague's support, but managed to remain independent by riding to victory on labor votes.⁸ As governor, Edison pledged to remove machine influence from New Jersey and the real fight against the lord of Jersey City began.

To finally settle the perennial and vexing problem of railroad finance in New Jersey, the new governor proposed a substantial reduction in railroad taxes. This meant that highly taxed communities like Jersey City which also enjoyed large tax yields from the concentration of railroads in their areas

would suffer the greatest amounts of lost revenues. Edison's purpose was a total overhaul of the state's antiquated tax structure, and he enjoyed the support of a majority of the state's business leaders.

Hague, estimating that Hudson County stood to lose \$2,000,000 annually⁹ from the revisions, charged that Edison had been bought by the railroad lobby and that the citizenry of the state was being robbed of legitimate monies. The unreasonable nature of his attacks on Edison failed to convince the legislature of the supposed honesty and soundness of the Mayor's position. "The violence of Hague's attacks overshadowed the tax issue, and for most Jerseyites the question was simply whether the legislature would yield to the Boss or roll him in the dust."¹⁰ The legislature approved Edison's tax reductions, after certain Republican legislators, who had initially opposed the measure, changed their minds as a result of Hague's tactics.

Governor Edison, as the terms of previous state appointments began to expire, proceeded to further incense Hague by appointing the Mayor's enemies to state offices. Frederick Colie, a bitter foe of Hague, received a seat on the New Jersey Supreme Court, and Spencer Miller, another of the Mayor's least favorite people, became the new State Highway Commissioner.¹¹ Edison also appointed a completely new Hudson County Tax Board, whereupon Hague telephoned him from Miami, "Charley, you turned out to be just the kind of governor I thought you'd be ... you ... Benedict Arnold!"¹²

Edison's most damaging attack came when he determined to provide a new Constitution for the state. Under the old Constitution,

the governor was "legally deprived ... of many removal powers."¹³ This meant that many secondary, but essential, offices held by pro-Hague men who had been appointed in the days of Governor Moore were beyond Edison's reach. To clean Hague out significantly, the state's reformers needed to adopt a new Constitution. The Mayor, with the help of Archbishop Walsh of Newark who appreciated Hague's fundraising activities on the behalf of his Darlington Seminary, managed to defeat the new Constitution referendum.¹⁴

But when Edison left office in 1944, much of Hague's political base in the state had been undermined, if not destroyed. The Edison years constituted the beginning of the end for the Mayor of Jersey City. "Edison was never entirely successful, but he dented Hague badly."¹⁵ The Republicans, in 1944, again using "Hagueism" as a campaign slogan, managed to elect former United States Senator Walter Edge to succeed Edison.

Edge promptly picked up the loose ends of Edison's efforts. He "reorganized the Hudson County election and jury systems, and replaced Hague's men in the prosecutor's office and on the Hudson County bench."¹⁶ Without a voice in Trenton, Hague was powerless to override the Governor's partial destruction of his machine. Next, Edge again proposed a referendum on a new Constitution which would greatly expand executive powers. This time, in 1947, with Edison Democrats supporting Edge Republicans, the new Constitution passed. The Catholic vote, which had defeated the 1944 Constitution, did not organize, and the reform forces won.

While opposing governors eroded Hague's influence on the state level, revolt began to brew in Hudson County. In the 1940's, quite simply, Hague spent too little time in Jersey City. As Thomas Fleming describes it,

"When he was not in Florida, he was sojourning in New York at the Plaza. Most of the city's political and economic business was conducted on the telephone, through Deputy Mayor Malone. For too many politicians in the organization, Hague had become a remote figure, no longer to be feared."¹⁷

During ~~his~~'s continual absences from Hudson County, "Home rule, not Hague rule" slates swept to victory in the towns of Bayonne, Hoboken, and North Bergen. Furthermore, a new generation of Jersey City residents was reaching maturity. Thousands of World War II veterans had returned after a brief glimpse at the outside world, and expressed dissatisfaction with traditional Jersey City methods of government. Although not immediately apparent, the handwriting was on the wall.

The political pie that Hague had seized thirty years before, was now being sought by others. Perhaps ~~he~~ realized that his brand of leadership had a limited future when he resigned as Mayor of Jersey City on June 4, 1947.¹⁸ In a magnificent ceremony, two weeks later at Dickinson High School, ~~he~~ handed over the reins of power to his nephew, Frank Hague Eggers, Jr. Before a crowd of 20,000 people, surrounded by A. Harry Moore, Mary Norton, John Milton, and John Malone,¹⁹ Hague spoke,

"I felt I could go to the people and ask for the privilege of retiring. Never have I been charged with mismanagement or corruption, and never have my acts been against the interests of the people. I am turning back the Seal of the City, unblemished with honor and dignity and with the knowledge that I have never betrayed the trust of the people. In justice to my city and my family, I must pass on the heavy burden of administrative duties to younger men."²⁰

As the other speakers told the crowd of Hague's humanitarian virtues, the old Mayor was seen dozing on the stage. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Hague arose and said, "Everything I have done, I have done from the heart."²¹

Eggers was a good choice. As the Jersey Journal described him,

"Frank Eggers was completely in touch with what people were thinking, with what they wanted, with their problems. He rated high marks for quiet organizational ability, administrative and executive skills; and even the anti-Hague people liked him as a person."²²

But it was too late. Eggers was seen as an extension of Hague, and many people in Jersey City were tired of the Boss. Rivalry within the machine produced the ingredients for a final overthrow.

John V. Kenny, son of Nat Kenny who had financed the young Hague's first political campaign, emerged as the leader of the opposition. Leader of the Second Ward and a machine lieutenant for decades, Kenny resented Eggers assuming the mayoralty. Nicknamed "the Little Guy," Kenny had ^{been} ~~waiting~~ for Hague's death before making a challenge of his own. But with Eggers installed in City Hall, Kenny realized ~~that~~ ^{that the time} ~~to~~ fight the Hague forces

was now to become mayor. He secretly began negotiating with Republicans in Newark about financing an opposition campaign. Hague discovered this breach of loyalty, and angrily read him out of the Democratic party and leadership of the Second Ward. By this action, Hague made up Kenny's mind. As the "Little Guy" later recalled, "Hague goaded me into running. If he had not thrown me out, I probably still would be a member of the machine."²³

Kenny kept silent until March, 1949, when he announced the formation of a "Freedom Ticket" challenging Mayor Eggers and the Hague machine in the May municipal elections. The death rattle of Boss Hague's power had begun. With an attractive personality and deep inside knowledge of machine operations, Kenny represented the first formidable challenge to Hague since 1917. Kenny was even more dangerous because the Second Ward, the strongest link in the machine, would vote for him automatically.

The ensuing campaign proved to be the wildest, most bruising election in Jersey City history. Hague rushed back from Miami and took to the stump in a final attempt to save his machine. To friendly crowds he shouted, "I haven't resorted to the wheelchair yet."²⁴ And referring to his Medical Center, "Will we turn over these buildings and desert motherhood?"²⁵ Constantly stressing Jersey City's low crime rate, and the machine's social welfare achievements, Hague and Eggers were confident that they could weather the storm.

But, as the "Freedom Ticket" denounced Hague's wealth and charged nepotism, more prominent Jersey City citizens announced

their support for Kenny. Kenny wisely included a Polish and an Italian candidate on his slate, welcoming the votes of Jersey City's other ethnic groups which now far outnumbered the Irish. Minor politicians "who saw in a Kenny victory a chance for quick promotion"²⁶ jumped on the "Freedom" bandwagon. Policemen were seen directing traffic on Journal Square with "their fingers raised in a V for a Kenny victory."²⁷

Hague retaliated by assembling all of his ward clubs and marching them into Kenny's home territory, the Second Ward. During the rally, Hague heard booes for the first time in his political career. As he was speaking, a hostile crowd formed around the ranks of his friendly wardheelers. A man threw a "Down with Hague" sign at the Boss and shouted, "G'wan back to Florida!" Hague blanched with anger and yelled to the police, "Arrest that man!" When the police remained in their places, ignoring the command of the former Mayor, the crowd realized that an era had ended.²⁸

After the Second Ward fiasco, party professionals realized that the machine was in great difficulty. Election Day showed the extent of the impending defeat. Kenny exhibited a sure knowledge of ward politics,

"His workers made the same heroic effort to get out their vote, matching the organization car for car, telephone call for telephone call. As many as forty-one watchers were on duty in each of the polling places, making it impossible for Hague to spring any of his old

rough-and-tumble tactics. Most important, the Kenny organization had unprecedented amounts of money to spend. The going rate in Jersey City had long been five dollars a vote ... Hague's ward leaders were soon deluged with frantic pleas for help from their district leaders. They simply could not match the Kenny prices."²⁹

For instance, at noon of Election Day, the Sixth Ward leader telephoned Deputy Mayor Malone and pleaded, "Johnny, I've got to have ten thousand dollars right away. They're paying fifteen dollars a vote and they're murdering us."

Malone replied, "The hell with them. We're not goin' over five dollars a vote and that's final. It'll give them bad habits."³⁰

Before the polls closed, Hague knew he was beaten. To prevent future prosecution, he and his inner circle burned the machine records at City Hall. At 9:00 PM, the result was official. Kenny had won by 22,000 votes, carrying every ward but the Sixth. Thousands of cheering unionists filled Journal Square, while a torchlight parade circled City Hall behind a coffin bearing the caption, "Here lies the remains of the Hague machine." The celebration, larger and noisier than the one for V. J. Day, went on through the night. It seemed as if in one day the people of Jersey City had thrown off the shackles that bound them.

The blame for the defeat rested squarely on Hague's shoulders. He had been beaten not by a reformer, but by an opposing machine politician. Personalities, rather than bossism and machine politics

had been the issues. "Due in no small measure to Hague's own neglect, neither of his basic resources -- the party machine and his governmental reputation -- was in adequate shape to meet a major challenge."³¹ Hague's personal organization had rebelled and chosen a new leader. Kenny never maintained that he would reform Jersey City, he simply offered himself as a younger boss who was more capable of directing the machine. Old age and not political philosophy had caught up with Frank Hague.

When the election results were reported, the former boss tearfully bade farewell to City Hall by saying, "I'll never enter this institution again."³² He would keep his word. Before he completely retired from public life, he made one last attempt to regain power by nominating Elmer Wene for governor against Republican Alfred Driscoll in the November, 1949 elections. Kenny consigned Wene to oblivion by throwing the support of the Hudson County Democratic organization behind Driscoll, and a Republican succeeded a member of his own party in the governor's chair in Trenton for the first time in twentieth century New Jersey history. The Hague years were over.

Hague spent the remaining years of his life shuttling back and forth between his Park Avenue apartment and his Florida home. In 1953, Eggers made a successful comeback attempt by winning a seat on the city commission, but died several months later. Hague made a rare public appearance for the funeral of his nephew, and told reporters that his mind was not on politics.³³ At the same time, the Kenny machine filed suit against the old boss on behalf of Jersey City municipal employees to return the millions of

dollars which had been "raked-off" in the former 3 % annual subsidy. Hague managed to avoid prosecution, and the public realized that the money, wherever it was, would never be returned.*

In the summer of 1955, Hague experienced chest pains, and Dr. White admitted him to the Harkness Pavilion of New York's Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Doctors discovered that he was seriously ill, but released him and he spent the remainder of the summer at his house in Deal, N. J. Hague was failing and losing weight. He commented, "The doctors tell me I'm improving, but I can look in the mirror."³⁴ He was readmitted to the Harkness Pavilion in September, but continued to fail. He returned to his Park Avenue apartment for Christmas and sent for several close friends. He told John Milton and John Malone that he realized he was dying, and that he never expected that they would outlive him. To Dr. White, he said, "I'm ready to go, I have nothing to regret."³⁵ Shortly afterward, he lapsed into a coma, and with his family at his bedside, Frank Hague died on January 1, 1956 at the age of eighty. Newspapers editorialized, "New Jersey will hardly seem the same without him."³⁶

The body was transferred to the Lawrence Quinn Funeral Home in Jersey City where it lay in state for two days. A solemn high funeral mass was said for the repose of his soul at Saint Aedan's Church. Few people turned out for the funeral, and a sense of disbelief rather than grief predominated. A woman in front of the church held a small sign, "God have mercy on his sinful, greedy soul," and the police chief took it away from her and tore

it up.³⁷ The body was taken to Holy Name Cemetery where it was interred in a white granite mausoleum which bore the name "Frank Hague" flanked by two small crosses. The boy from the Horseshoe had come home.

Even in death, Frank Hague left a lasting imprint on his city. Today people vividly remember the Boss either from fear or loyalty. The mention of his name excites almost the same emotions it did twenty years ago. The vassals of Frank Hague have not forgotten. The lord is gone, but his legacy determines the political life of his former fief.

CHAPTER X

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APPENDIX A

Address By President Franklin D. Roosevelt
At the Dedication of The Medical Center

Johnson
ADDRESS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE MEDICAL CENTER, JERSEY CITY,
N.J. OCTOBER 2, 1936

Senator Moore, Mayor Hague, my friends and neighbors of Jersey City:

I do not think there is any person with red blood in his veins who would not be thrilled by this wonderful sight. I am very happy to come here to take part in the dedication of this, the third largest medical institutional group in the whole of the United States.

The Mayor has been kind enough to say that this Medical Center would not have been possible without financial help from the Federal Government. But, my friends, remember that it was not just financial help that created this Medical Center. It was something more important than dollars and cents. It was a dream of your Mayor dating back many years. That is what built the Medical Center.

In the great work of taking care of sick people, the Federal Government and the local governments have been glad to play their part. It is true that the Public Works Administration in Washington has helped various communities to increase the capacity of American hospitals in the past two years by 50,000 beds.

During the depression the difficulty of obtaining funds through municipal or private sources would have meant a serious

shortage in taking care of sick people and in giving them adequate facilities, had it not been for Federal assistance through loans and grants.

But there is another reason for increasing the bed capacity of the hospitals of the country. The medical and nursing professions are right in telling us that we must do more, much more, to help the small-income families in times of sickness.

Let me with great sincerity give the praise which is due to the doctors and the nurses of the Nation for all that they have done during those difficult years that lie behind us, often at great sacrifice, in maintaining the standards of care for the sick and in devoting themselves without reservation to the high ideals of their profession.

These professions can rest assured that the Federal Administration contemplates no action detrimental to their interests. The action taken in the field of health, as shown by the provisions of the splendid Social Security Act recently enacted, is clear.

For that Act does not only provide unemployment insurance for people who, through no fault of their own, get out of work. That Act contains four provisions dealing with health that are very often forgotten, especially in the heat of a political campaign. Those provisions received the support of outstanding doctors during the hearings before the Congress. The American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association and the State and Territorial Health Officers Conference, and I

think the nurses' associations as well, came out in full support of the public health provisions. The American Child Health Association and the Child Welfare League endorsed the maternal and child health provisions.

This in itself assures the Nation that the health plans will be carried out in a manner compatible with our traditional social and political institutions. Let me make that point very clear. All States and Territories are now cooperating with the Public Health Service. And nearly all of them are cooperating in maternal and child health service, and in service to the crippled children of the Nation.

Public support is behind this program. Let me add that the Act contains every precaution for insuring the continued support and cooperation of the medical and nursing profession.

In the actual administration of the Social Security Act we count on the cooperation in the future, as hitherto, of the whole of the medical profession throughout the country. The overwhelming majority of the doctors of the Nation want medicine kept out of politics. On occasions in the past attempts have been made to put medicine into politics. Such attempts have always failed and always will fail.

Government, State and national, will call upon the doctors of the Nation for their advice in the days to come.

A great many years ago I discovered something, and so did Mayor Hague. We discovered a common bond, a common interest

in the cause of the crippled child. That common bond has persisted through the years. I have tried to help in my limited way. Frank Hague has done a great service not only to you good people who are alive today in Jersey City and Hudson County, but a service that is going to last for many, many generations to come. It is a service than which there is none higher within the range or the bounds of human endeavor. Mayor Hague, his associates, and the people of this city have pointed the way for many other communities in the Nation. May they see and emulate the fruition of this splendid dream.

APPENDIX B

Unpublished Memoir by Miss Jessie Murdoch

(Director of Nurses at the Medical Center)*

* The memoir is a shortened version of her "The Mayor Hague I Knew" which defends Hague's policies. Included is a letter to the editor of the Jersey Journal which gives her explanation.

III Lawton Blvd.,
Toronto Ontario,
September 1961.

To The Editor Of The Jersey Journal,
Journal Square, Jersey City,
New Jersey.

Dear Sir:

There are few people throughout the country, or in his own city, who believed Mayor Hague to be a humanitarian. In view of the abuse thrust upon him in life, and even in death, I have long since felt I would like to submit my impressions.

It may be you would not wish to publish the enclosed, but if you think well of it much editing might have to be done.

The citizenry of Jersey City, I am afraid, think only of taxes in connection with the Medical Centre. Well and good. But there is much more to it than that. There should be also the appreciation of a great humanitarian who had the vision and the courage to see it through.

Should you decide to publish my piece, I would prefer my initial only, and not my name.

Very Sincerely,

Jessie M. Murdoch.

MEMORABILIA.*

Upon leaving New York Harbour aboard ship, many of us have looked in awe and wonder at the towering structure of the Jersey City Medical Centre's majestic buildings as they come into view against a background of blue sky.

Any many times we have come up out of the Hudson Tube in Jersey City, and gazed in sheer admiration at these gorgeous buildings which stand as towering sentinels for the health and welfare of the people.

We who had the privelege (sic) of watching the day by day planning of this huge hospital plant, remember the constant care and attention to every detail Mayor Hague gave in the planning, building and equipping of this worthy momument, (sic) for the Welfare of all of Jersey City.

As the years passed, and the Centre, which he had seen with such clear vision some 15 years before, gradually materialized, we tried to appreciate the mental and moral stature of the man who had planned and executed this lasting structure.

In prospect, the years of fulfillment seemed to stretch ahead in endless duration. In retrospect, their growth seems to have been jet propelled.

* Shortened version of Miss Murdoch's "The Mayor Hague I Knew."

I met Mayor Hague for an interview, in the Fall of 1922. When I was ushered into his Office, I found myself facing a commanding and inspiring person. He was tall, erect, quietly differential, and at ease. He had a keen sense of humor, as well as a keen insight into human nature, and it was good to be in the presence of a person who had command of himself.

His voice was vibrant. He presented his plan for a Jersey City Medical Centre with vigor and enthusiasm. I soon found I was talking with a man of broad social conviction and understanding.

Health, he pointed out with simple directness, was the common denominator of all social achievement, and his conception of a well rounded governmental unit included facilities which would make good health a reality to all citizens of Jersey City.

A whole panarama of service was spread out before me, as he planned with concise detail his dream for the future. He had the ability to grasp any point I projected, and to leap far ahead of me in his deductions.

Life, as he saw it, was an exciting adventure, and I found myself eager to work with one who could see so far ahead and plan so well.

Only in an Institution where a Leader is willing to provide all the necessary facillities, (sic) could so much have been accomplished so well.

We who have lived at the cross roads have become aware of constant change, the tearing down of outmoded buildings, the erection of newly planned sky scrapers, and the replacement of old practices with new and tested proceedures. (sic) And with a Leader, in

whom one has every confidence, we took these things in our stride.

In all of his planning, the Mayor retained his respect for the dignity of human personality, endeavoring to control the environment of the individual in such a way that only desirable reactions were brought out.

As an extension of his own humanitarian attitudes, policemen and firemen knew the residents of their communities, and threw their protective service about them.

In making rounds in the hospital it was not unusual to come across Mayor Hague in the Wards, talking with an elderly man or woman whose eyes fairly beamed at having a visitor. His many personal kindnesses gave a sense of his friendship.

The long lapse of what can be done to improve the health of the community, and what is done, has become much shorter under the system of service set up by Mayor Hague. He never lost sight of the science of health, or moral protection, or of constant kindness. His interest in the juvenile problems of his day was an example, but he was often misunderstood.

Looking back as I often do, I realize that the Mayor's planning for the community welfare, extended literally from the cradle to the grave.

We who grew up with this enormous planning, can mention many developments which are now so often taken for granted, but which could not have become permanent (sic) structure without Mayor Hague's ability to see it through. Nor could we now have the kind of care the Medical Centre now gives, without his ability to have lain the ground work for what was to follow.

To mention a few of the most outstanding achievements which his leadership developed, and which were far ahead of what had been instituted in other hospitals, I would mention these as most important:

- 1.- The 500 bed Tuberculosis Pavilion completed in 1936.
- 2.- A new Surgical Pavilion and Medical Unit, constructed between 1930-36, for the accomodation (sic) of all types of patients of patients (sic) requiring Medical and Surgical care.
- 3.- The Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital. A fitting tribute of a devoted son to his mother. Here the miracle of child berth (sic) has been made safe for all mothers, and the building has acquired National fame.
- 4.- An outstanding Health Program for student nurses which set a new standard for health programs in other hospitals.
- 5.- An Out Patient Department which eventually evolved into a City Wide Official Agency, and from which came the Public Health Nursing Service of Jersey City.
- 6.- A Unit for Poliomyelitis after the communicable stage had passed.
- 7.- Dental Care available for all school children.
- 8.- A special unit for the study and care of the Geriatric patient.

These are a some (sic) of the more important developments that had their beginnings in Mayor Hague's plan for development and growth.

APPENDIX C

An Open Letter to President Roosevelt
From Oswald Garrison Villard Condemning
Hague's Policies and Demanding His Removal

A Letter to the President

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: As a personal friend of yours since the beginning of your political career I have resented the charges leveled against you that you were seeking to undermine American institutions and to set yourself up as a dictator. I could well understand the sense of indignation that made you recently deny this in a public statement. You were correct in saying that you are not of the material of which dictators are made, even had you thought of becoming one. But the man or men who fail to stand up and fight for civil liberties and for republican institutions in crucial times like these are quite as likely to lead the country into a dictatorship -- by default -- as the men who deliberately seek to impose their will upon their countrymen. This is the lesson of the collapse of the German Republic.

I have been moved to these thoughts by reading the appalling news that in a press conference on May 10 you refused to comment upon Mayor Hague's defiance of the Constitution of the United States, saying that that was "purely a local police matter." In response to a second question as to whether you as leader of your party would take any action in regard to Mayor Hague's continuing as vice-chairman of the National Democratic Committee, you sidestepped the issue by saying that that should be brought to the attention of Jim Farley as chairman of the committee. This seems to me nothing less than a betrayal of the fundamental principles which underlie our institutions. A breach of the Constitution a local issue? How is it possible to justify such

Letter - cont'd. - 2

a statement except by a narrow technicality? It is the Constitution of the entire United States that Mayor Hague is breaching and nullifying. It is not the constitution of Jersey City or of the state of New Jersey. Do you recall that a Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1880, General Winfield Scott Hancock, made himself a laughing-stock by declaring that the tariff was "a local affair"? Well, he was just as much entitled to say that of the tariffs imposed by the Congress of the United States as you are to assert that Hague's open defiance and nullification of the Constitution are a purely local police matter. It is not a question of law enforcement, but of the expression of a righteous public indignation.

From the very beginning of your Administration you have only occasionally -- and if I remember correctly, mostly in the first year or two of your Administration -- touched on the subject of civil liberties, as you did in speaking recently to the B'nai B'rith. You made only a half-hearted fight against lynching, and after the defeat of the bill gave as your excuse to a delegation of colored people that you thought your advocacy of it would have hurt more than helped. Why can you not see that in that case and in the Hague situation it is time to rise above the question of expediency and to come out fearlessly and frankly on the vital necessity of standing by the Constitution and all its clauses until they are amended? Such an utterance would do more for public order and respect for law than can possibly be

Letter - cont'd. - 3

estimated. You could make everybody in New Jersey who upholds the lawlessness of Mayor Hague understand by a single radio talk that his pretense that this is merely a fight to bar communism and anarchy from Jersey City is the purest nonsense, unmitigated lying. By one such utterance you could not only uphold the Constitution but make it clear once and for all that any talk of your seeking to undermine the Constitution is a gross and inexcusable libel.

As for saying that you, the leader of the party, can only refer to Jim Farley the question of whether the National Committee shall be further defiled by Mayor Hague's remaining as vice-chairman -- that is quite unworthy of you. Jim Farley is your creature; he is in the Cabinet to take your orders, and he is chairman of the National Committee by your word. You have only to say to him or to the public that Mayor Hague's remaining as vice-chairman is a stench in the nostrils of all decent citizens, and Mayor Hague would find promptly that his health required his retirement from the arduous vice-chairmanship. By your silence on this great issue you are yourself striking a most dangerous blow at the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. A true patriot in your position at the present moment would take the first train to Jersey City and stand up in the public square there without asking for any permit, and tell Mayor Hague, his police, and the American Legion what true patriotism is and denounce their violation of the Constitution. One member of your Cabinet, Harold Ickes, has spoken out magnificently on this very issue. Why do

Letter - cont'd. - 4

you not back him up; why do you not join him when he says that our liberties are endangered by just such attacks on the Constitution as those in Jersey City? Must history record that you were wanting when it came to defending the Constitution you were sworn to uphold?

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

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